PARTISAN REVIEW

PR

JULY - AUGUST, 1941

W. H. AUDEN
At the Grave of Henry James

MARY McCARTHY
The Man in the Brooks Brothers Shirt

ETIEMBLE
Jules Romains, or the Perils of Deification

PAUL MATTICK
How New is the 'New Order' of Fascism?

GEORGE ORWELL
London Letter

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS
An Exultation

MARIANNE MOORE
He "Digesteth Harde Yron"

•

10 Propositions on the War
by
GREENBERG and MACDONALD

4

25¢ A COPY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Announcing....

THE ANTIOCH REVIEW

...for Summer, 1941

Monopoly And The Corporate State.....*Lewis Corey*

The Anatomy Of The Present Crisis.....*Melvin Rader*

The Rabbi And The Galilean.....*William Zukerman*

Diet And Defense.....*T. Swann Harding*

and other articles by

Albert Guérard, J. Donald Kingsley, Max Werner and Herman Schnurer

PUBLISHED FOUR TIMES A YEAR AT YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO

SUBSCRIPTION: TWO DOLLARS SINGLE COPY: FIFTY CENTS

"MARXISM IS DEAD..DR. PARKES PROVES IT" reads the publisher's blurb on a recent book.

Marxism has been pronounced dead before. But like the proverbial cat it seems to have nine lives. Former Marxists fill the magazines with re-valuations of Marxism. Why all this effort if Marxism is really dead? The number of its enemies—let alone its friends—would seem to indicate that Marxism is still very much alive.

LIVING MARXISM

. . . now in its fifth year . . . does not concern itself with what is living and what is dead in Marx's work. It applies the *critical theory* that Marx used to analyze the social structure of his time *to our own period*. LIVING MARXISM deals with the present—with the war, the social needs of today, and the changes in the economic and political structure that are going on all around us.

Read LIVING MARXISM and judge the quality of the Marxian *critical theory* by what it can do to clarify the intellectual chaos.

Send 25c for a sample copy *today*

LIVING MARXISM

P. O. Box 5343, Chicago, Ill.

Subscription rate: 5 issues for $1.00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PARTISAN REVIEW

VOLUME VIII, No. 4 JULY-AUGUST, 1941

JULES ROMAINS, OR THE PERILS OF DEIFICATION	258	*Etiemble*
AT THE GRAVE OF HENRY JAMES	266	*W. H. Auden*
10 PROPOSITIONS ON THE WAR	271	*Clement Greenberg* *Dwight Macdonald*
THE MAN IN THE BROOKS BROTHERS SHIRT	279	*Mary McCarthy*
HOW NEW IS THE 'NEW ORDER' OF FASCISM?	289	*Paul Mattick*
POEMS		
An Exultation	311	*William Carlos Williams*
He "Digesteth Harde Yron"	312	*Marianne Moore*
LONDON LETTER	315	*George Orwell*
CONTRIBUTORS	343	
RESULTS OF THE P.R. QUESTIONNAIRE	344	
LETTERS	348	
LETTER FROM AN ARMY CAMP	351	

Editors: CLEMENT GREENBERG, DWIGHT MACDONALD, GEORGE L. K. MORRIS, WILLIAM PHILLIPS, PHILIP RAHV. Business Managers: NANCY MACDONALD, WILLIAM PETERSEN.

PARTISAN REVIEW is published at 45 Astor Place, New York, N. Y.

PARTISAN REVIEW is published six times a year. Subscription: $1.00 yearly; Canada, $1.15; other foreign countries, $1.30. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Copyright July, 1941, by PARTISAN REVIEW. Reentered as second-class matter, January 20, 1940, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jules Romains, or the Perils of Deification

Etiemble

TIME WAS WHEN, disguised as a gangster or a pimp and flanked by some gay dogs, Jules Romains used to sit on the terraces of chic cafés and startle the old fogeys. Time was when, anxious to ridicule the commercial press and the reputations it fabricated, Jules Romains proclaimed "Prince of Thinkers" some wretched hack named Pierre Brisset, bamboozling the great, the solid, the all-knowing newspapers and for a moment transforming Brisset into Bergson. Time was when Jules Romains, writing *Boën,* conceived a man so corrupted by money as to want a *Bottin* created which would classify people according to their wealth, a *Who's Who* which would be the *Almanach de Gotha* of high finance. Time was —it was during *the* war, the other one, the little one—when Jules Romains knew how to express the essence of it all in a few words:

Europe! je n'accepte point
Que tu meures dans ce délire
. . . . . .
Ils auront beau pousser leur crime
Je reste garant et gardien
*De deux ou trois choses divines.**

Time was (I was not yet born) when Jules Romains did himself honor by such words as: "We would have wept to have caused pain to Claudel or Verhaeren."

How times have changed! President of the P.E.N. Club, M. Jules Romains presides all over the place; he gives an "official" lecture at Médan; he submits to the Senate, which condescends to take an interest, a *Plan for the 9th of July;* he tries to 'bring together,' as they say, Germany and France, advises Daladier, knows "the King's man" and the secrets of the gods; he persuades himself that he has "a position unique . . . in Europe, and even in

**Europe,* 1917.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the world." From the *Saturday Evening Post* to the *Excelsior* of Mexico, the commercial press showers with money the man who once showered it with ridicule. Today when M. Jules Romains speaks of Europe, it is to say, in 330 pages (not counting the table of contents), nothing worth hearing or that we did not know already. 1917—*Europe;* 1940—*Les Sept Mystères du Destin de l'Europe:* the moral and intellectual history of Jules Romains is written in these titles. Instead of the simple word, the poem which said everything, *Europe,* here a quarter of a century later is the appeal to cheapness: *Seven,* the mystic number; *Mysteries,* without which no book sells today; *Fate,* another come-on word; *Europe,* our chief concern.

* * * *

We must look into such a fall as this, seek out its causes.

Literary fashion, of course, has something to do with it: every talented writer, every well-known poet is today invited, no matter how remote from such matters, to vaticinate on the state of the world. In their so-called political writings, some authors keep some or all of their dignity as writers, as T. S. Eliot or Benda. Others, more numerous, forget what they owe themselves and what they owe us. When Thomas Mann defends against the "pluto-democracies" the "social" empire of Kaiser Wilhelm II, when he summons up a Third Reich (as in 1917, in *Frederick and the Grand Alliance*), when he prophesies, in the contrary sense, *The Coming Victory of Democracy* or puts his name to *The City of Man,* his arguments are all equally unworthy of his genius.* Now, as in the past—*nulle pensée; pensée nulle.* And do you think Valéry is any better, when he lets fall his *Regards sur le Monde Actuel?* Like Thomas Mann or Paul Valéry, Jules Romains is a victim of literary fashion and of a misconception of the workings of democracy.

But there is something more serious involved here. There is, in the career of Jules Romains, more than one sign which allows one to foresee the man we deplore today. Let us always distin-

*I will not criticise what some would call his 'irresponsibility.' I merely observe that, with many great creators, political thought engages none of their essential powers and is merely a reaction to the demands of their milieu. I state the facts; I do not judge. If I judged, it would not displease me that the author of *Buddenbrooks,* of the *Magic Mountain* or of *Mario and the Magician* was incompetent in other fields than novel writing.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

guish, however, from the jack-of-all-trades that M. Farigoule* has become, the writer that was Romains. (It is indeed, folly of the most pernicious sort to demand of the artist precisely those virtues which belong to the politician. "Happy the society," said Diderot, after Confucius and other wise men, "Happy the society in which every one sticks to his own work and only to that!") As a writer, Jules Romains can fairly ask to be judged by the standards of his craft.

No doubt one could have discovered in the birth of the Unanimist movement, a premonitory sign of the *Seven Mysteries:* every founder of a school is suspect of careerism. At the same time, it must be admitted that, in the 'free' capitalist jungle, every artist who doesn't found at least two rival schools is doomed to twenty years of washing cars, depending on his luck, or of selling at cut prices Latin, Greek, or God knows what. Together with Naturism, Futurism, Humanism, Romanism, Instantism, Paroxysm, Intimism, etc. . . . Unanimism was simply one of innumerable sects in which, after the failure of the 'Symbolist' mutual-advertising gang, certain young gentlemen who were impatient of fame organized themselves. One would have preferred to have Romains get his start in some other way; his school, which protested against the sterile and anarchistic individualism of the 19th century, had still (as yet) some good intentions, or at least good will. A pity that, to sustain his glory as "leader," the novelist had to stick to the narrow path of orthodoxy. If *Le Bourge Régénéré,* if *Mort de Quelqu'un* (published in English as "Death of a Nobody") properly illustrate the Unanimist metaphysic—the first in a manner both genial and truculent, the second not without grandeur—*Puissances de Paris* (1919) shows the dangers of the system. The 150 pages of this little volume profess to show how, within a great city, various "nuclei" (in the form of Parisian squares or streets) "achieve self consciousness."

> It exists without perfection. Where does it begin to become something else than a number of intersecting streets? When does it become a street in flower? It is like the middle of a sheaf, whose binding, firm and warm, one can take in one's hand.

This, it seems, is the Rue du Havre. All the other arteries and

*Romains' real name is Farigoule—Ed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

veins of Paris are of the same kidney. The whole thing reeks of trickery. I can't say either that all the Unanimist poems are good that stretch out between *L'Ame des Hommes* (1904) and *Amour Couleur de Paris* (1921). There are some lines of *Europe*, there is the *Ode à la Foule*, beautiful despite Unanimism—and, over against these, what trash! All the same, in the first seventeen years of his literary career Jules Romains remains faithful to his calling. Even those who criticise *Les Copains* (American title: "The Boys in the Back Room") for imitating the 'mystifications' in vogue with *Ecole Normale Supérieure* students, even they have to salute the author of *Le Vin Blanc* and *Mort de Quelqu'un*. For, in these two books, the doctrine is limited to determining the choice and disposition of details which remain humanly believable; nothing is invented to justify orthodoxy. This is 1920.

Alas, the years 1920-1925 are painful. Not that life was hard—quite the contrary. But nothing tests the artist more sternly than the hope of success, or the temptation of a fat check. Those young men who came safely through the war—everything smiled at them, everything was permitted them, every duchess seemed to be fascinated by them. It was just then, between *Donogoo-Tonka* and the *Vision Paroptique* ("The Paroptical Vision") that Jules Romains weakened and abandoned himself to facility. What verve, what intelligence, what graciousness in the former little sketch, which makes fun of the scientific method by proclaiming the "cult of scientific error"! What a healthy reaction against the pedantry of a Sorbonne whose weaknesses Péguy had so frequently and brutally exposed! *Donogoo* dates from 1920. Two or three years later all Paris resounded with the quarrel over "paroptical vision": a young unknown, or known only among a few coteries, a certain Jules Romains had discovered that men know how to read blindfold, through their pores. With tooth and nail, this young man defends against the ironical sceptics, the truth of his "paroptical" discovery. The Sorbonne, speaking through Georges Dumas, the psychologist, this time is in the right against Romains. Articles, insults, calumnies, no matter what: Jules Romains is famous. As if it were not enough to acquire fame at this price, Romains at once exploits his advantage by writing his comedy *Dr. Knock* (the film version of which is now showing in New York), by which he gains wealth and glory. When I knew this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thumb-nail sketch by heart, around 1925, how could I have suspected, a mere high-school boy from the provinces, that the work which amused me grew out of the resentments of an imposter unmasked?*

* * * *

With glory and fame begins the public career of that man, navel of the world, who also calls himself Jules Romains.

In this new role the author of *Le Vin Blanc,* the pal of *Les Copains,* became the friend of the smart set in Europe: MM. Bonnet, von Ribbentrop, Henri de Man, Abetz. Two corruptors, two corrupted. In this new role, M. Jules Romains, after 1934, continued to place his confidence in the man who, bending before the threats of a *small* fascist revolt, only returned to govern France with the permission and support of those who had consigned him to the firing-squad—the Croix de Feu, and so-called Patriotic Youth: Daladier. In this new character, M. Jules Romains, after '38, continued to campaign for the man who, knowing he was making a mistake, nevertheless signed at Munich: Daladier, a MacMahon *manqué*† Such were his friendships and such his judgment when M. Jules Romains became a public figure. Is it not therefore reasonable for him to be proud of *his* titles, *those* titles?

All this would be a trifle, but from the day Jules Romains meddled with politics, he ceased to understand that very thing which he understood so well when he was only a writer. But art has a strange revenge: it is the same man who, wishing to save France, offers the *Plan du 9 Juillet;* it is the same man who, wishing to save Europe, writes *Le Couple France-Allemagne;* it is the same man who, wishing to save the world, writes *The Seven Mysteries;* it is the same man who, as a playwright, reconstructed beforehand, in his *Dictator,* the events which many years later were followed by the electoral victory of Léon Blum. Drawing only on the resources of his creative imagination, Romains deduced to the minutest details the strikes of '36, the pitfalls of power, even to Daladier (Denis) persecuting Marceau Pivert (Féréol), even to

*Romains confessed to Dr. Paul Vasse that his attack on doctors may have had as its direct cause the rebuff given to his "paroptical vision." See Paul Vasse, *Jules Romains and the Doctors. Essay on the Origins of Knock,* Paris, Vigot.

†While a blind crowd applauded the "peacemaker" on his return from the trap, Daladier is said to have said, with weariness and disgust, "Ah les cons!" ("The dumbbells!") See J. P. Maxence, *History of Ten Years,* Paris, NRF, 1939, p. 351, n. 1.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the opportunist throwing into prison the incorruptible doctrinaire. As soon as he was in a position to know the real events, M. Jules Romains went blind. Then he created his *Plan,* his *Couple,* his *Seven Mysteries.*

Finally, last outrage, once M. Jules Romains becomes famous and experienced in politics, it is at the expense of his literary work. It goes without saying that they do not disappear all at once, those qualities that one admired in *Le Vin Blanc,* or in *Mort de Quelqu'un:* the intelligence, humor, human feeling, sense of style. *Musse ou l'Hypocrisie* is still a fine work; *Le Crime de Quinette* a good detective story; even in the second-rate dramas like *Boën* one finds an atmosphere, a style, or an idea; even in *Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté* ("Men of Good Will"), even in the last volumes of this long rhapsody, one finds an exquisite page, either true or beautiful—but one also finds in the works of the abbé de Pure exquisite pages, true and beautiful; even in *Verdun,* which, with his *Prélude,* is one of the flattest of all war books, even in this magma where Pétain appears like a *deus ex machina*—anyway like a pure spirit—where the officers of the General Staff speak in a manner never heard among officers of the General Staff, even in this mish-mash suddenly Jules Romains becomes natural again—in the charming letter addressed to Wazemmes by Mlle. Anne de Montbreuze du Cauchet.

Despite these vestiges, one must recognize that from the trilogy of *Psyché* to the *Seven Mysteries* (without forgetting that *Visit to the Americans* which even a Maurois would have disavowed) the work of Jules Romains shows only the disintegration of an exceptional intelligence and talent. I have sometimes heard this failure attributed to the vanity of the writer or else his avarice. I know very well that Jules Romains recently refused to speak before an *Alliance Française* meeting for the good reason that they couldn't pay M. Farigoule ten times the usual fee. The avarice of M. Jules Romains is not at all a state secret, despite his "deep politics." But I esteem the author of *Le Vin Blanc* enough to seek elsewhere the cause of so painful a collapse. If I am not mistaken, the *Petit Manuel de Déification* has something, or a great deal, to do with it. Except for mystics, for whom the idea of predestination (or of original sin) compensates, through the humility which these doctrines impose on man, for the superhuman pride which

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they run the risk of falling into as the result of their communing with God—with this exception, all those who have tried to deify themselves however little—Caracalla, Hitler or Jules Romains—all, whatever their technique of deification, have succeeded in corrupting in themselves and debasing in those around them the values which produce great men and permit the existence of a human world. To be "a hero, a saint for oneself," à la Baudelaire —perfect! But what is a god which would be god only in himself and for himself? Every god must manifest himself. From the *Manuel de Déification* to the *Seven Mysteries*, Jules Romains has only too plainly "manifested" himself, Romains the "unique." If, at least, this god, like the god of Nietzsche, was a dancing god! If, at least, this god, like the god of Nietzsche, was a dancing god! Dieu-Farigoule would be rather a seated god, a "sitter." To make an end of these "mystifications"—god takes himself seriously. Only the impudence of a god who deceives himself could produce, under the title of *Visit to the Americans*, the description of a Pullman car; only the impudence of a god who traps himself in his own nets could put forth, under the title of *Plan for the 9th of July*, the end-product of several café conversations, watered with excellent cognac, between a dozen pretentious "intellectuals"; only the impudence of a god who believes himself assured of immunity could write pages 219 and after in the French edition of *Seven Mysteries*.

There it is recorded how at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* "sixty or so carefully chosen" young Frenchmen met with some representatives of the Nazi movement: Abetz, and perhaps a lieutenant of Baldur von Schirach. "These young people who surrounded me," M. Jules Romains writes modestly, "were delighted to ask a few questions of their German friends and to get from them, if it was possible, some enlightenment." The Nazis talked at their ease; then the Frenchmen were invited to ask some questions—by writing them on slips of paper. M. Jules Romains, who "presided," collected the slips, deciphered them, and respectfully transmitted to Mr. Abetz those questions which did not risk embarrassing these precious guests. As for the positive or precise questions, no one, except perhaps Jules Romains, ever knew what became of them. Mine, for example. I was in fact one of the "sixty," one of the "carefully chosen" (but I was not one of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"young men of the 9th of July" that Jules Romains pretends took part). My friends and I came out disgusted with this gathering, which had no other results than to permit the Nazis to expound with impunity their hypocrisies to an exceptionally sensitive group of French youth. "Everything passed off," concluded M. Romains, "in correct and even cordial fashion." I'm afraid it was M. Dieu-Farigoule's bad luck that I, who am in no way endowed with his ubiquity, that I found myself precisely there, one of the "sixty" (there were about 25 of us) to expose the lie.

* * * *

Moreover, I venture to doubt that Mr. Romains properly deified himself.

One of my friends one day saw a man enter his room in the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, who came to make an estimate of needed repairs; with a tape measure he wandered about, putting down in a notebook figures and notes.

"Say, while you are here," said the student, "you might change a pane in the window."

The visitor smiled.

". . . and then there's that creaky board there. Try and fix that."

The visitor smiled a little more palely.

". . . and then . . ."

After two or three ". . . and thens . . ." the face of the visitor turned frankly yellow.

Nevertheless it was not a barbarian or a country bumpkin who neglected to recognize you, Jules Romains, who neglected to recognize in you the "unique," the god, while for some chapter on Jallez and Jerphanion, you were calculating the dimensions of this room. It was the son of the mathematician and Bergsonian Le Roy, professor at the Collège de France—one of the upper crust.

You were annoyed, I know that. If you had had the strength to laugh to the end, and to consider yourself simply a plain man, you would perhaps have become one of our gods (because we only believe in those we create for ourselves); in any case, you would not have written the *Seven Mysteries;* you would not have caused pain to all the Claudels and all the Verhaerens to come.

(*Translated by Nancy and Dwight Macdonald*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At the Grave of Henry James

W. H. Auden

The snow, less intransigent than their marble,
Has left the defence of whiteness to these tombs;
    For all the pools at my feet
Accommodate blue now, and echo such clouds as occur
To the sky, and whatever bird or mourner the passing
    Moment remarks they repeat.

While the rocks, named after singular spaces
Within which images wandered once that caused
    All to tremble and offend,
Stand here in an innocent stillness, each marking the spot
Where one more series of errors lost its uniqueness,
    And novelty came to an end.

To whose real advantage were such transactions,
When worlds of reflection were exchanged for trees?
    What living occasion can
Be just to the absent? O noon but reflects on itself,
And the small taciturn stone that is the only witness
    To a great and talkative man,

Has no more judgment than my ignorant shadow
Of odious comparisons or distant clocks
    Which challenge and interfere
With the heart's instantaneous reading of time, time that is
A warm enigma no longer in you for whom I
    Surrender my private cheer.

Startling the awkward footsteps of my apprenhension,
The flushed assault of your recognition is
    The *donnée* of this doubtful hour:
O stern proconsul of intractable provinces,
O poet of the difficult, dear addicted artist,
    Assent to my soil and flower.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As I stand awake on our solar fabric,
That primary machine, the earth, which gendarmes, banks,
And aspirin presuppose,
On which the clumsy and sad may all sit down, and any who will
Say their a-ha to the beautiful, the common locus
Of the master and the rose.

Our theatre, scaffold, and erotic city,
Where all the infirm species are partners in the act
Of encroachment bodies crave,
Though solitude in death is *de rigeur* for their flesh,
And the self-denying hermit flies as it approaches
Like the carnivore to a cave.

That its plural numbers may unite in meaning,
Its vulgar tongues unravel the knotted mass
Of the improperly conjunct,
Open my eyes now to its hinted significant figures,
Sharpen my ears to detect amid its brilliant uproar,
The low thud of the defunct.

O dwell ironic at my living centre,
Half ancestor, half child; because the actual self
Round whom time revolves so fast
Is so afraid of what its motions might possibly do,
That the actor is never there when his really important
Acts happen. Only the past

Is present, no one about but the dead as,
Equipped with a few inherited odds and ends,
One after another we are
Fired into life to seek that unseen target where all
Our equivocal judgments are judged and resolved in
One whole alas or hurrah.

And only the unborn remark the disaster
When, though it makes no difference to the pretty airs
The bird of Appetite sings,
And Amour Propre is his usual amusing self,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Out from the jungle of an undistinguished moment
The flexible Shadow springs.

What but the honour of a great house, what but its
Cradles and tombs may persuade the bravado of
The bachelor mind to doubt
Its dishonest path, or save from disgraceful collapse
The creature's shrinking withness bellowed at and tickled
By the huge immodest Without?

Now more than ever when torches and snare-drum
Excite the squat women of the saurian brain
Till a milling mob of fears
Break in insultingly on anywhere, when in our dreams
Pigs play on the organs and the blue sky runs shrieking
As the Crack of Doom appears,

Are the good ghosts needed with the white magic
Of their subtle loves. War has no ambiguities
Like a marriage; the result
Required of its *affaire fatale* is simple and sad,
The physical removal of all human objects
That conceal the Difficult.

Then remember me that I may remember
The test we have to learn to shudder for is not
An historical event,
That neither the low democracy of a nightmare nor
An army's primitive tidiness may deceive me
About our predicament.

That catastrophic situation which neither
Victory nor defeat can annul; to be
Deaf yet determined to sing,
To be lame and blind yet burning for the Great Good Place,
To be essentially corrupt yet mournfully attracted
By the Real Distinguished Thing.

Let this orchard point to its stable arrangement
Of accomplished bones as a proof that our lives

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Conceal a pattern which shows
A tendency to execute formative movements, to have
Definite experiences in their execution,
To rejoice in knowing it grows.

And shall I not specially bless you as, vexed with
My little inferior questions, today I stand
Beside the bed where you rest
Who opened such passionate arms to your *Bon* when It ran
Towards you with its overwhelming reasons pleading
All beautifully in its breast?

O with what innocence your hand submitted
To those formal rules that help a child to play
While your heart, fastidious as
A delicate nun, remained true to the rare noblesse
Of your lucid gift, and for its own sake ignored the
Resentful muttering Mass

Whose ruminant hatred of all which cannot
Be simplified or stolen is still at large;
No death can assuage its lust
To vilify the landscape of Distinction and see
The heart of the Personal brought to a systolic standstill,
The Tall to diminished dust.

Preserve me, Master, from its vague incitement;
Yours be the disciplinary image that holds
Me back from agreeable wrong
And the clutch of eddying muddle, lest Proportion shed
The alpine chill of her shrugging editorial shoulder
On my loose impromptu song.

Suggest; so may I segregate my disorder
Into districts of prospective value: approve;
Lightly, lightly, then, may I dance
Over the frontier of the obvious and fumble no more
In the old limp pocket of the minor exhibition,
Nor riot with irrelevance.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And no longer shoe geese or water stakes but
Bolt in my day my grain of truth to the barn
Where tribulations may leap
With their long-lost brothers at last in the festival
Of which not one has a dissenting image, and the
Flushed immediacy sleep.

Knowing myself a mobile creature, descended
From an ancient line of respectable fish,
With a certain *méchant* charm,
Occuping the earth for a grass-grown interval between
Two oscillations of polar ice, engaged in weaving
His conscience upon its calm.

Despising Now yet afraid of Hereafter,
Unable in spite of his stop-watch and lens
To imagine the rising Rome
To which his tools and tales migrate, to guess from what shore
The signal will flash, to observe the anarchist's gestation
In the smug constricted home.

Into this city from the shining lowlands
Blows a wind that whispers of uncovered skulls
And fresh ruins under the moon,
Of hopes that will not survive the *secousse* of this spring,
Of blood and flames, of the terror that walks by night and
The sickness that strikes at noon.

All will be judged. Master of nuance and scruple,
Pray for me and for all writers living or dead;
Because there are many whose works
Are in better taste than their lives, because there is no end
To the vanity of our calling; make intercession
For the treason of all clerks.

Because the darkness is never so distant,
And there is never much time for the arrogant
Spirit to flutter its wings,
Or the broken bone to rejoice, or the cruel to cry
For Him whose property is always to have mercy, the author
And giver of all good things.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

10 Propositions on the War

Clement Greenberg and Dwight Macdonald

1. *This war is 'different' from the last one.*

This war is not 'essentially' a repetition of the 1914-1918 conflict. There are decisive differences—in economy, politics, war aims—between the two sides. The writers are not agreed as to whether these differences go so far as to constitute a new kind of society in Germany, but they do agree on their existence. The Kaiser's victory would not have meant a *break* in our civilization. Hitler's would.

2. *Fascism is less desirable than democratic capitalism.*

Fascism in general and Nazism in particular do not represent the kind of revolution the bourgeoisie led against feudalism, but a union of advanced technology with reactionary social concepts. A Nazi-dominated Europe will be politically enslaved, economically impoverished, culturally barbarous.

3. *The issue—not war but revolution.*

Modern politics revolve on the axis of War. But the real issue is not the war itself—'for?' 'against?'—but the war in relation to social revolution. The choice is not whether to Defend America by Aiding the Allies or to Keep America out of War. Neither formula *in itself* will advance us one step nearer the only real solution, which is to deflect the current of history from fascism to socialism.* In the war or out of it, the United States faces only one future under capitalism: fascism. The socialist alternative: i.e., to win the war without losing democracy, can be realized only by revolutionary mass action.

4. *Isolationism is provincial inanity.*

The argument of the Keep America Out of War Committee, which unites pacifists, liberals and Norman Thomas socialists on an isolationist platform, is that if we go in, we will go totalitarian ourselves. Agreed. But if we keep out and Hitler wins, how does the future look? Immediate: competition in the world market with a totalitarian Europe, building a huge 'defensive' war machine —undertakings which, under capitalism (and the Committee takes

*'Socialism' we define as collectivised property plus political democracy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no stand on an alternative system), also demand totalitarian controls. Long range (5 to 10 years): the third, and climactic, World War, the final showdown between German and American imperialism. This can be postponed, but it is provincial idiocy to think, as Thomas and his KAOW seem to, that the America of 1941 could turn its back on the world and peacefully cultivate its own back yard. Assuming the persistence of capitalism in this country, the left interventionists have all the better of the argument. And it is just here that Thomas offers the same old program of peaceful, respectable, 'evolutionary' progress whose last pretensions were shattered in 1914.

5. *To support the Roosevelt-Churchill war regimes clears the road for fascism from within and blocks the organization of an effective war effort against fascism outside.*

The line which most of the left today favors (liberal weeklies, top labor bureaucracy, Committee for Democratic Action, such ex-Marxists as Eastman, Corey and Hook) is to support the Roosevelt-Churchill war regime as the 'lesser evil' to Hitlerism. But hasn't the experience of the last decade shown clearly that the very most democratic capitalism can do is *retard* the advance of fascism (and even that only under exceptionally favorable circumstances), and that it cannot negate or destroy fascism? Haven't we yet learned that this is a period when the greater evil yields not to the lesser evil, but only to the positive good? (The Brüning regime was a 'lesser evil' to fascism in its day.) By now the social system of Churchill and Roosevelt is so incompetent to plan large-scale production whether for war or peace, so lacking in appeal to the masses, that it is a weapon which is breaking in the hands of those who would turn it against Hitlerism.

The war party proclaims theirs as the only 'realistic' anti-fascist program. They reject a revolutionary struggle for socialism during the war as 'Quixotic' if not worse. We say *theirs* is the unrealistic course, we say *they* are the true Don Quixotes, foolishly dreaming of defending an antiquated way of life.* If the isolationists are provincial, the interventionists lack a historical sense. No deficiency could be more fatal today.

*Quixote's delusion was to over-estimate his antagonists, seeing windmills as giants, sheep as armies. His modern similars see giants as windmills and Nazis as simple lunatics. They show, however, as great a capacity of idealization, as cf. the Dulcinea of Churchill-Roosevelt democracy, the Rosinante of the Anglo-American war machine.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The experience of the British labor movement, after a year of 'realistic' collaboration with Churchill and the Tories against Hitler, should teach us something. As has been the case for half a century, from Millerand to MacDonald and Blum, this 'collaboration' really means submission of the ruled to their rulers. To the increasing dismay of liberals, the centre of gravity of the Churchill-Labor government has shifted steadily to the *right* in the past year.* Similar effects are beginning to appear in this country: the use of the Army to break the North American Aviation strike. In both countries, the logic of politics has turned the present governments against the greatest living force against fascism: the labor movement.

All this might be stomached as a 'lesser evil' to a Nazi victory —but it is just the point that 'all this' is making such a victory increasingly likely. Thus in England the political suicide of the Labor Party, in restoring to power the Tories, has given back the conduct of the war precisely to those who can never win it.

The lesser evil policy means toleration of the existing social system. But capitalism is *intolerable,* in a functional as well as a moral sense. It has become archaic to the point where the ruling class can no longer defend its own interests within that form. Evidence: the failure of England, even after a year of total war, to create a real war economy; our own increasing difficulties along that line; the political ineptness of the 'democracies' in the war to date; the lack of war aims; the constant indications that almost no one, *including the capitalists,* any longer seriously believes that the old order will survive this war. The alternatives the 'lesser evil' policy of supporting Roosevelt-Churchill presents are: military defeat, owing to the superiority of fascism in total warfare; or victory under a fascist system of our own.

6. *The workingclass alone can lead a successful fight against Nazism because it alone can overmatch the Nazis in* (1) *military methods,* (2) *war production,* (3) *war aims.*

(1) Hitler's advanced methods of waging war reflect his advanced politics—advanced in the sense that they manifest a greater awareness of the present state of the world and a more serious resolution to meet its problems than shown by the bour-

*See Orwell's letter in this issue; also the account of the recent British Labor Party convention, in *Time* for June 16.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

geois democracies. A social revolution throwing a new class—the proletariat—into power would produce even more advanced methods of waging war, since this new class would be under a minimum of illusions and would have no interest in salvaging the *status quo* with all its impediments. It would be able to act with a directness and a realism and therefore an efficiency even Hitler —after all, only a pseudo-revolutionary—could not match; it would open up opportunities to the new talents we now so urgently need.

(2) In this war you see a new phenomenon. The British and American bourgeoisie, tied to a system of private property hopelessly archaic vis-a-vis the economic demands of modern warfare, are unable to organize production efficiently enough to win their own imperialist war. Such planning as we have seen has come from the workingclass. The British did not even begin to create a modern war economy until the Labor Party took over the key economic posts last year. In this country, the CIO 'Industrial Councils' Plan and the Reuther Plan for mass production of aircraft by the automobile industry are much the boldest and most reasonable proposals for all-out war production. It is true that the reformist *political* line of the British and American labor chiefs who put forward these plans, based as it is on the perpetuation of capitalism and hence the subordination of labor to the bourgeoisie, has made it easy for the ruling class to sabotage them. The significance of the plans remains, however. In putting them forward, Bevin and Morrison, Murray and Reuther are speaking as representatives of a class whose interests are in congruence and not in conflict with the organization of a planned economy. Nothing less than this will beat Hitler.

(3) As even the conservatives are beginning to realize, this is a 'political' war. The lack of any inspiring—or even sensible—war aims is therefore the greatest weakness of the capitalist democracies. The Churchillian defenders of democracy agree with the appeasers in that they cannot conceive of any war aims more desirable than the preservation of the social *status quo*. (They differ only as to whether Hitler or the British Empire would be the better preserver.) Thus in Nazi-occupied countries, where native revolutions could win the war for England, Churchill's propaganda arouses little response. Actually, the rulers of Great

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Britain were afraid to encourage a revolution in Italy at the time of the Libyan reverses because they knew that such a revolt could only come from the Left, under the banners of socialism. And so British airplanes dropped leaflets on the Italian countryside which read: "REMEMBER GARIBALDI'S CURSE: WOE TO HIM WHO FIGHTS AGAINST ENGLAND!" (Those dropped in Germany are most likely copies of Schiller's poem on the defeat of the Spanish Armada.)

As long as Churchill-Roosevelt and their class conduct the war against Hitler, the masses everywhere can hope for little *for themselves* from Hitler's defeat. Only a program which promises a real reorganization of society can inspire the peoples in the conquered countries to dare to revolt, to take the risks involved by widespread and constant sabotage. And only workingclass socialism can offer them such a program.

7. *The involvement of Russia in the war does not change the issues.*

Now that Hitler has attacked Russia, we may expect to see one more indication that the political line of the American Communist Party is simply a reflex of Soviet foreign policy. Already the Stalinists' fraudulent anti-war propaganda is yielding to ever louder calls for all aid to the 'workers' fatherland.' Tomorrow they will be the most ardent supporters of Roosevelt's war policy —if he gives such aid. But the issues of the war are still the same in the sense that without socialist revolution, fascism will triumph in one form or another. The writers disagree as to whether or not Soviet Russia should be supported against Hitler, but they agree that the struggle against the present conduct of the war and for socialism in this country cannot be relaxed one jot, regardless of the effect on aid to Russia.*

8. *Social revolution in England or America would not necessarily 'open the gates to Hitler.' It would most probably be short and relatively peaceful and lead to an immediate intensification of the war effort.*

It is likely that the revolution, if it comes at all during this war, will be neither a protracted nor an especially violent struggle.

*My position here, I admit, is a difficult one and open to serious misunderstanding, but no matter: as Trotsky said, "If we theoretically admit war [involving the Soviet Union] without revolution, then the defeat of the Soviet Union is inevitable." If we admit this present war without revolution, the defeat of humanity is inevitable.—C. G.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Its chief opposition will be a ruling class so discredited by its military incapacity and so demoralized by its own mistakes as to be unable to offer serious resistance for some time to come. As in the French and Russian revolutions, the *ancien régime* will surprise everybody with the suddenness and completeness of its collapse. Even in England, and certainly in this country, the actual transfer of power need not offer Hitler any 'open door.' The real revolutionary struggle will come considerably later, when the counter-revolution has had time to organize itself. (This, by the way, may also be expected to take place *abroad*, as in the French and Russian experiences, with Hitler backing the counter-revolution *à la* Pitt-Clemenceau.) The revolutionary cause, calling for a more efficient, energetic and uncompromising fight against Hitler, will immediately become the patriotic cause *par excellence*. Counter-revolutionaries would be open to the charge of treason and by their very least acts would identify themselves with the foreign enemy. As in the Great French Revolution, the fight against the enemy within would only intensify the struggle against the enemy without.

9. *There exists today no organized leadership for such a revolutionary policy as we advocate. But, while this is a serious lack, it is not a fatal one. New organizational forms must and will be found.*

We can learn valuable lessons, of course, from the Russian revolution, but it is not the pattern for all revolutions. Many of those who today deprecate most violently the practicability of a successful revolution conceive of the socialist revolution exclusively in terms of Bolshevism, arguing that since such a party is necessary, and since no such party of any significance exists today, therefore the prospect is hopeless. They are Leninists in reverse.

A tightly disciplined and trained organization was a necessity in Russia because of the extremely low cultural level of the masses. This backwardness was such as to require, as midwives of the revolution, a 'general staff' of Bolshevist experts who had to take every initiative themselves and were unable to delegate responsibility or authority in a democratic way. Here in the West it is quite otherwise. The technical competence and relatively high cultural level of the individual worker would make for a much wider distribution of initiative and authority, thus making

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

possible, indeed necessary, a quite different kind of party from the Bolshevik model. A looser party, reflecting the diversity of a more highly developed society, perhaps a grouping of parties rather than The Party.

It is wrong to look at the question of political parties *sub specie eternitas:* the Great French Revolution was not 'made' by any one party, nor was the 1905 Russian revolution. While it is true that *some* form of organization is necessary, and does not exist today, this deficiency does not of itself invalidate the general line of these propositions. And if this line of development is correct, if the capitalist order in England and America is as unequal to the problems of this war period as we think it is, then we can at least today propagandize such ideas and support such tendencies as seem to lead towards the formation of a party or movement which will be able to take advantage of the 'revolutionary situations' we believe will develop in the future. Parties sometimes make history, but history also makes parties.

10. *To win the war against fascism, we must work for the replacement of the present governments in England and the United States by workingclass governments committed to a program of democratic socialism. All support of whatever kind must be withheld from Churchill and Roosevelt.*

Otherwise we are lost. They can only lead us to disaster. The attack upon them and what they represent should take the form of constant and radical criticism of their conduct of the war. This criticism must be coupled with demands for the greatest possible mass participation in the leadership and guidance of the state, referenda upon crucial issues, workingclass control of economic planning, public diplomacy, democratisation of the army, equality for Negroes, etc., etc.* These demands are by their very nature an attack upon the existing social order, and it is incon-

*There are those who will say that these demands *per se* are so impracticable as to cancel themselves out in the public consciousness: there won't be enough time to put such demands into effect, and even should they be put into effect the machinery of the state and the army would become so cumbersome and slow as to be ruinous to the prosecution of the war. As for (1), this war has so far consisted of long periods of comparative inactivity, punctuated by short bursts of fighting, which would have given Great Britain and France ample time to reorganize themselves along the lines proposed. Such changes can take place more speedily in wartime than in peace. The British still have time. As for (2), democratisation of the state and the army does not exclude the limited delegation of authority in emergencies, and it is debatable whether referenda would take more time than the deliberations of bourgeois statesmen.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ceivable that Churchill or Roosevelt would or could grant them. The policy of Laski, Strachey, Bevan, Williams and the left wing of the British Labor Party of supporting the present government and at the same time pressing for such demands, therefore, means in practice giving up these demands and acquiescing in the *status quo*. The choice is inescapable: which do you put first, your support or your demands? Laski & Co. put their support first, we put our demands first. The conclusion is equally inescapable: opposition to any government which cannot grant such demands. The experience of the last year in England, to delve no deeper into history, seems to indicate that the fight for an all-out socialist war effort can be prosecuted only from *outside* the present regimes in England and this country. Only socialism can win this war. Only uncompromising, unambiguous and unflagging opposition to Churchill and Roosevelt can win socialism.

Roosevelt-Churchill have a simple, all too simple formula for victory: kill enough Germans. Aside from the fact that the cost of such a victory would make it an empty one, entailing the destruction of as much that we love as that we hate, the truth is that the democracies cannot defeat Hitler by force. They cannot get close enough to slug it out—even assuming they are better at slugging than the Germans. And so for years to come they must content themselves with long-range attrition, warfare that exhausts and kills but does not decide. What future does this hold out to our civilization?

The only way this conflict can be won in the interests of mankind as a whole is by some method of warfare that will transfer the struggle from the flesh of humanity to its mind. Such a method is offered only by the cause of the socialist revolution.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Man in the Brooks Brothers Shirt

Mary McCarthy

THE NEW MAN who came into the club car was coatless. He was dressed in gray trousers and a green shirt of expensive material that had the monogram "W.B." embroidered in darker green on the sleeve. His tie matched the green of the monogram, and his face, which emerged rather sharply from this tasteful symphony in cool colors, was blush pink. The greater part of his head appeared to be pink, also, though actually toward the back there was a good deal of closely cropped pale gray hair that harmonized with his trousers. He looked, she decided, like a middle-aged baby, like a young pig, like something in a seed catalogue. In any case, he was plainly Out of the Question, and the hope that had sprung up, as for some reason it always did, with the sound of a new step soft on the flowered Pullman carpet, died a new death. Already the trip was half over. They were now several hours out of Omaha; nearly all the Chicago passengers had put in an appearance; and still there was no one, no one at all. She must not mind, she told herself; the trip west was of no importance; yet she felt a curious, shamefaced disappointment, as if she had given a party and no guests had come.

She turned again to the lady on her left, her *vis-à-vis* at breakfast, a person with dangling earrings, a cigarette-holder, and a lorgnette, who was somebody in the New Deal and carried about with her a typewritten report of the hearings of some committee which she was anxious to discuss. The man in the green shirt crowded himself into a loveseat directly opposite, next to a young man with glasses and loud socks who was reading Negley Farson's "Way of a Transgressor." Sustaining her end of a well-bred, well-informed, liberal conversation, she had an air of perfect absorption and earnestness, yet she became aware, without ever turning her head, that the man across the way had decided to pick her up. Full of contempt for the man, for his coatlessness, for his color-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scheme, for his susceptibility, for his presumption, she nevertheless allowed her voice to rise a little in response to him. The man countered by turning to his neighbor and saying something excessively audible about Negley Farson. The four voices, answering each other, began to give an antiphonal effect. Negley Farson was a fine fellow, she heard him pronounce; he could vouch for it, he knew him *personally*. The bait was crude, she reflected. She would have preferred the artificial fly to the angleworm, but still. . . . After all, he might have done worse; judged by eternal standards, Farson might not be much, but in the cultural atmosphere of the Pullman car, Farson was a titan. Moreover, if one judged the man by his intention, one could not fail to be touched. He was doing his best to *please* her. He had guessed from her conversation that she was an intellectual, and was placing the name of Farson as a humble offering at her feet. And the simple vulgarity of the offering somehow enhanced its value; it was like one of those home-made cakes with Paris-green icing that she used to receive on her birthday from her colored maid.

Her own neighbor must finally have noticed a certain displacement of attention, for she got up announcing that she was going in to lunch, and her tone was stiff with reproof and disappointment so that she seemed, for a moment, this rococco suffragette, like a nun who discovers that her favorite novice lacks the vocation. As she tugged open the door to go out, a blast of hot Nebraska air rushed into the club car, where the air-cooling system had already broken down.

The girl in the seat had an impulse to follow her. It would surely be cooler in the diner, where there was not so much glass. If she stayed and let the man pick her up, it would be a question of eating lunch together, and there would be a little quarrel about the check, and if she let him win she would have him on her hands all the way to Sacramento. And he was certain to be tiresome. That monogram in Gothic script spelled out the self-made man. She could foresee the political pronouncements, the pictures of the wife and children, the hand squeezed under the table. Nothing worse than that, fortunately, for the conductors on these trains were always very strict. Still, the whole thing would be so vulgar; one would expose oneself so to the derision of the other passengers. It was true, she was always wanting something exciting and romantic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to happen; but it was not really romantic to be the-girl-who-sits-in-the-club-car-and-picks-up-men. She closed her eyes with a slight shudder: some predatory view of herself had been disclosed for an instant. She heard her aunt's voice saying, "I don't know why you make yourself so cheap," and "It doesn't pay to let men think you're easy." Then she was able to open her eyes again, and smile a little, patronizingly, for of course it hadn't worked out that way. The object of her trip was, precisely, to tell her aunt in Portland that she was going to be married again.

She settled down in her seat to wait and began to read an advance copy of a new novel. When the man would ask her what-that-book-is-you're-so-interested-in (she had heard the question before), she would be able to reply in a tone so simple and friendly that it could not give offense, "Why, you probably haven't heard of it. It's not out yet." (Yet, she thought, she had not brought the book along for purposes of ostentation: it had been given her by a publisher's assistant who saw her off at the train, and now she had nothing else to read. So, really, she could not be accused of insincerity. Unless it could be that her whole way of life had been assumed for purposes of ostentation, and the book, which looked accidental, was actually part of that larger and truly deliberate scheme. If it had not been this book, it would have been something else, which would have served equally well to impress a pink middle-aged stranger.)

The approach, when it came, was more unorthodox than she had expected. The man got up from his seat and said, "Can I talk to you?" Her retort, "What have you got to say?" rang off-key in her own ears. It was as if Broadway had answered Indiana. For a moment the man appeared to be taken aback, but then he laughed. "Why, I don't know; nothing special. We can talk about that book, I guess."

She liked him, and with her right hand made a gesture that meant, "All right, go on." The man examined the cover. "I haven't heard about this. It must be new."

"Yes." Her reply had more simplicity in it than she would have thought she could achieve. "It isn't out yet. This is an advance copy."

"I've read something else by this fellow. He's good."

"You have?" cried the girl in a sharp, suspicious voice. It

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was incredible that this well-barbered citizen should not only be familiar with but have a taste for the work of an obscure revolutionary novelist. On the other hand, it was incredible that he should be lying. The artless and offhand manner in which he pronounced the novelist's name indicated no desire to shine, indicated in fact that he placed no value on that name, that it was to him a name like Hervey Allen or Arthur Brisbane or Westbrook Pegler or any other. Two alternatives presented themselves: either the man belonged to that extraordinary class of readers who have perfect literary digestions, who can devour anything printed, retaining what suits them, eliminating what does not, and liking all impartially, because, since they take what they want from each, they are always actually reading the same book (she had had a cousin who was like that about the theatre, and she remembered how her aunt used to complain, saying "It's no use asking Cousin Florence whether the show at the stock company is any good this week; Cousin Florence has never seen a bad play")—either that, or else the man had got the name confused and was really thinking of some popular writer all the time.

Still, the assertion, shaky as it was, had given him status with her. It was as if he had spoken a password, and with a greater sense of assurance and propriety, she went on listening to his talk. His voice was rather rich and dark; the accent was middle-western, but underneath the nasalities there was something soft and furry that came from the South. He lived in Cleveland, he told her, but his business kept him on the go a good deal; he spent nearly half his time in New York.

"You do?" she exclaimed, her spirits rising. "What *is* your business?" Her original view of him had already begun to dissolve, and it now seemed to her that the instant he had entered the club car she had sensed that he was no ordinary provincial entrepreneur.

"I'm a traveling salesman," he replied genially.

In a moment she recognized that this was a joke, but not before he had caught her look of absolute dismay and panic. He leaned toward her and laughed. "If it sounds any better to you," he said, "I'm in the steel business."

"It doesn't," she replied, recovering herself, making her words prim with political disapproval. But he *knew;* she had given

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

herself away; he had trapped her features in an expression of utter snobbery.

"You're a pink, I suppose," he said, as if he had noticed nothing. "It'd sound better to you if I said I was a burglar."

"Yes," she acknowledged, with a comic air of frankness, and they both laughed. Much later, he gave her a business card that said he was an executive in Little Steel, but he persisted in describing himself as a traveling salesman, and she saw at last that it was an accident that the joke had turned on her: the joke was a wry, humble, clownish one that he habitually turned on himself.

When he asked if she would join him in a drink before lunch, she accepted readily. "Let's go into the diner, though. It may be cooler."

"I've got a bottle of whiskey in my compartment. I *know* it's cool there."

Her face stiffened. A compartment was something she had not counted on. But she did not know (she never had known) how to refuse. She felt bitterly angry with the man for having exposed her—so early—to this supreme test of femininity, a test she was bound to fail, since she would either go into the compartment, not wanting to (and he would know this and feel contempt for her malleability), or she would stay out of the compartment, wanting to have gone in (and he would know this, too, and feel contempt for her timidity).

The man looked at her face.

"Don't worry," he said in a kind, almost fatherly voice. "It'll be perfectly proper. I promise to leave the door open." He took her arm and gave it a slight, reassuring squeeze, and she laughed out loud, delighted with him for having, as she thought, once again understood and spared her.

In the compartment, which was off the club car, it *was* cooler. The highballs, gold in the glasses, tasted, as her own never did, the way they looked in the White Rock advertisements. There was something about the efficiency with which his luggage, in brown calf, was disposed in that small space, about the white coat of the black waiter who kept coming in with fresh ice and soda, about the chicken sandwiches they finally ordered for lunch, that gave her that sense of ritualistic "rightness" that the Best People are supposed to bask in. The open door contributed to this sense: it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was exactly as if they were drinking in a show window, for nobody went by who did not peer in, and she felt that she could discern envy, admiration, and censure in the quick looks that were shot at her. The man sat at ease, unconscious of these attentions, but she kept her back straight, her shoulders high with decorum, and let her bare arms rise and fall now and then in short parabolas of gesture.

But if for the people outside she was playing the great lady, for the man across the table she was the Bohemian Girl. It was plain that she was a revelation to him, that he had never under the sun seen anyone like her. And he was quizzing her about her way of life with the intense, unashamed, wondering curiosity of a provincial seeing for the first time the sights of a great but slightly decadent city. Answering his questions she was able to see herself through his eyes (brown eyes, which were his only good feature, but which somehow matched his voice and thus enhanced the effect, already striking, of his having been put together by a good tailor). What she got from his view of her was a feeling of uniqueness and identity, a feeling she had once had when, at twenty, she had come to New York and had her first article accepted by a liberal weekly, but which had slowly been rubbed away by four years of being on the inside of the world that had looked magic from Portland, Oregon. Gradually, now, she was becoming very happy, for she knew for sure in this compartment that she was beautiful and gay and clever, and worldly and innocent, serious and frivolous, capricious and trustworthy, witty and sad, bad and really good, all mixed up together, all at the same time. She could feel the power running in her, like a medium on a particularly good night.

As these multiple personalities bloomed on the single stalk of her ego, a great glow of charity, like the flush of life, suffused her. This man, too, must be admitted into the mystery; this stranger must be made to open and disclose himself like a Japanese water flower. With a messianic earnestness she began to ask him questions, and though at first his answers displayed a sort of mulish shyness ("I'm just a traveling salesman," "I'm a suburban business man," "I'm an economic royalist"), she knew that sooner or later he would tell her the truth, the rock-bottom truth, and was patient with him. It was not the first time she had "drawn a man out"——the phrase puckered her mouth, for it had never seemed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

like that to her. Certain evenings spent in bars with men she had known for half an hour came back to her; she remembered the beautiful frankness with which the cards on each side were laid on the table till love became a wonderful slow game of double solitaire and nothing that happened afterwards counted for anything beside those first few hours of self-revelation. Now as she put question after question she felt once more like a happy burglar twirling the dial of a well-constructed safe, listening for the locks to click and reveal the combination. When she asked him what the monogram on his shirt stood for, unexpectedly the door flew open.

He told her his name, and went on irrelevantly, "I get these shirts at Brooks Brothers. They'll put the monogram on if you order the shirts custom-made. I always order a dozen at a time. I get everything at Brooks Brothers except ties and shoes. Leonie thinks it's stodgy of me."

Leonie was his wife. They had a daughter, little Angela, and they lived in a fourteen-room house in the Gates Mills section of Cleveland. He also had a son by another marriage, little Frank, and Frank and Leonie got on wonderfully, he was glad to say, but then nobody could deny that Leonie had a wonderful disposition. Leonie was a home girl, quite different from Eleanor, who had been his first wife and was now a decorator in New York. Leonie loved her house and children. Of course, she was interested in culture too, particularly the theatre, and there were always a lot of young men from the Cleveland Playhouse hanging around her; but then she was a Bryn Mawr girl, and you had to expect a woman to have different interests from a man.

Leonie was a Book of the Month Club member and she also subscribed to the two liberal weeklies. "She'll certainly be excited," the man said, grinning with pleasure, "when she hears I met somebody from the *Liberal* on this trip. But she'll never be able to understand why you wasted your time talking to poor old Bill."

The girl smiled at him.

"I *like* to talk to you," she said, suppressing the fact that nothing on earth would have induced her to talk to Leonie.

"I read an article in those magazines once in a while," he continued dreamily. "Once in a while they have something good, but on the whole they're too wishy-washy for me. Now that I've

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had this visit with you, though, I'll read your magazine every week, trying to guess which of those things in the front you wrote."

"I'm *never* wishy-washy," said the girl, laughing. "But is your wife radical?"

"Good Lord, no! She calls herself a liberal, but actually I'm more of a radical than Leonie is."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, you take the election. I'm going to vote for Landon because it's expected of me, and my vote won't put him in."

"But you're really for Roosevelt?"

"No," said the man, a little impatiently. "I don't like Roosevelt either. I don't like a man that's always hedging his bets. Roosevelt's an old woman. Look at the way he's handling these CIO strikes. He doesn't have the guts to stick up for Lewis, and he doesn't have the sense to stay out of the whole business." He leaned across the table and added, almost in a whisper, "You know who I'd like to vote for?"

The girl shook her head.

"Norman Thomas!"

"But you're a steel man!" said the girl.

The man nodded.

"Nobody knows how I feel, not even Leonie." He paused to think. "I was in the last war," he said finally, "and I had a grand time. I was in the cavalry and there weren't any horses. I was the youngest American major in the World War, and after the armistice we were stationed in Cologne, and we got hold of a Renault and every weekend we'd drive all night so we could have a day on the Riviera." He chuckled to himself. "But the way I look at it, there's a new war coming and it isn't going to be like that. God Almighty, we didn't hate the Germans!"

"And now?"

"You wait," he said. "Last time it was supposed to be what you people call an ideological war—for democracy and all that. But it wasn't. That was just advertising. You liberals have all of a sudden found out that it was Mr. Morgan's war. You think that's terrible. But let me tell you that Mr. Morgan's war was a hell of a lot nicer to fight than this new one will be. Because this one will be ideological, and it'll be too damned serious. You'll wish that you had the international bankers and munitions men to stop the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fight when things get too rough. I'd like to see this country stay out of it. That's why I'm for Thomas."

"You're a very interesting man," said the girl, tears coming to her eyes, perhaps because of the whiskey. "I've never known anyone like you. You're not the kind of businessman I write editorials against."

"You people are crazy, though," he said genially. "You're never going to get anywhere in America with that proletariat stuff. Every working man wants to live the way I do. He doesn't want me to live the way he does. You people go at it from the wrong end. I remember a Socialist organizer came down fifteen years ago into Southern Illinois. I was in the coal business then, working for my first wife's father. This Socialist was a nice fellow. . . ."

His voice was dreamy again, but there was an undercurrent of excitement in it. It was as if he were reviving some buried love affair, or, rather, some wispy young tendresse that had never come to anything. The Socialist organizer had been a distant connection of his first wife's; the two men had met and had some talks; later the Socialist had been run out of town; the man had stood aloof, neither helping nor hindering.

"I wonder what's become of him," he said finally. "In jail somewhere, I guess."

"Oh no," said the girl. "You don't understand modern life. He's a big bureaucrat in the CIO. Just like a business man, only not so well paid."

The man looked puzzled and vaguely sad. "He had a lot of nerve," he murmured, then added quickly, in a loud, bumptious tone, "But you're all nuts!"

The girl bit her lips. The man's vulgarity was undeniable. For some time now she had been attempting (for her own sake) to whitewash him, but the crude raw material would shine through in spite of her. It had been possible for her to remain so long in the compartment only on the basis of one of two assumptions, both of them literary, (a) that the man was a frustrated socialist, (b) that he was a frustrated man of sensibility, a kind of Sherwood Anderson character. But the man's own personality kept popping up, perversely, like a Jack-in-the-box, to confound these theories. The most one could say was that the man was frustrated. She had hoped to "give him back to himself," but these fits of self-assertion

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on his part discouraged her by making her feel that there was nothing very good to give. She had, moreover, a suspicion that his lapses were deliberate, even malicious, that the man knew what she was about and why she was about it, and had made up his mind to thwart her. She felt a Take-me-as-I-am, an I'll-drag-you-down-to-my-level challenge behind his last words. It was like the resistance of the patient to the psychoanalyst, of the worker to the Marxist: she was offering to release him from the chains of habit, and he was standing up and clanking those chains comfortably and impudently in her face. On the other hand, she *knew*, just as the analyst knows, just as the Marxist knows, that somewhere in his character there was the need of release and the humility that would accept aid—and there was, furthermore, a kindness and a general cooperativeness which would make him pretend to be a little better than he was, if that would help her to think better of herself.

For the thing was, the man and the little adventure of being with him had a kind of human appeal that she kept giving in to against her judgment. *She liked him.* Why, it was impossible to say. The attraction was not sexual, for, as the whiskey went down in the bottle, his face took on a more and more porcine look that became so distasteful to her that she could hardly meet his gaze, but continued to talk to him with a large, remote stare, as if he were an audience of several hundred people. Whenever she did happen to catch his eye, to really look at him, she was as disconcerted as an actor who sees a human expression answering him from beyond the footlights. It was not his air of having money, either, that drew her to him, though that, she thought humorously, helped, but it hindered too. It was partly the homespun quality (the use of the word, "visit," for example, as a verb meaning "talk" took her straight back to her childhood and to her father, carpet-slippered, in a brown leather chair), and partly of course his plain delight in her, which had in it more shrewdness than she had thought at first, for, though her character was new and inexplicable to him, in a gross sense he was clearly a connoisseur of women. But beyond all this, she had glimpsed in him a vein of sympathy and understanding that made him available to any human being, just as he was, apparently, available as a reader to any novelist—and this might proceed, not, as she had assumed

(*Continued on page 324*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How New Is the 'New Order' of Fascism?

Paul Mattick

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONS recognize in the totalitarian regimes new social and economic systems incompatible with their own ideas of freedom and progress. The fascists, too, speak of the existence of "two worlds" which must fight each other until one of them succumbs. The democracies become increasingly more "fascistic" the more vigorously they defend their system. And the fascists claim that there is more "real democracy" within their "new order" than there ever was in liberal capitalism. They see in their own rise to power a real revolution that is changing the whole of society. Some "anti-fascists" share this view, but speak of the "fascist revolution" as a "substitute revolution," "middle-class revolution," "managerial revolution," "nihilist revolution," and so forth. Others describe the present social transformation as a "counter-revolution against a revolution that did not take place," or as a political movement that merely serves the internal and imperialistic interests of monopoly capitalism.

The abundance of definitions of fascism is, in itself, interesting, but it does not help to lay bare the real differences between the fascistic states and the capitalistic democracies. That differences exist is obvious. An investigation of the change from the "old" into the "new" social order shows, however, that the transition affects only some, not all of the social and economic relationships that constitute the capitalistic system. The questions are, then: (1) Are these differences important enough to justify the claim that an old socio-economic system has been replaced by a new *and basically different* system? (2) Will the new system be subject to the contradictions and developmental laws of capitalism?

Laissez Faire versus State Control

The essential difference between the "old" and the "new" social order is that between *laissez faire* and a controlled economy. The general competition which characterized the early stage of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

capitalist development was interpreted as an assurance that the market mechanism of the commodity-producing society provided for a more or less harmonious growth of production and the wealth of nations. Whoever prospered under *laissez faire* was bound to believe in a *law of supply and demand* that brought order into social production and distribution. Whoever did not fare so well was inclined to rebel against this philosophy. Free-trade, recognized as advantageous to the more developed capitalist nations, could be opposed by the less developed countries only with additional political means such as state-fostered industries and tariff regulations. The *laissez faire* theory was opposed by theories favoring state interventions in the economy.

The question of free-trade was always debated and never solved. It could not be solved because the protectionists were protectionists only in order to compete with the free-traders; the latter, controlling the trade of the world, were actually protectionists. These issues disappeared temporarily whenever there was rapid capital expansion and they always returned as soon as this expansion stopped.

However, the present-day struggle between "democratic" and "fascist" economies, though still partly determined by the inequality of opportunities for participating in the world-exploitation of labor, goes beyond the old struggle. Today state interferences in the economy are no longer restricted to national protection against foreign competition but involve the destruction of the internal market as well. Of course, even the former limited form of state interference disturbed the internal markets, but the adjustment to new situations thus created was left to the decisions of the individual capitalists. State interferences are no longer designed mainly for protective but for aggressive purposes; they are the medium of present-day imperialism.

Long before the rise of fascism, competitive capitalism was replaced in each capitalist nation by monopoly capitalism. The markets were controlled by trusts and cartels. The development from *laissez faire* to monopoly capitalism led to the creation of the world market, the international division of labor, the concentration of capital, and the increase of the productivity of labor. They are all interdependent; one is unthinkable without the others.

The fascist economy and its social structure is the direct

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

outcome of the previous process of capitalistic competition. It is thus not possible to oppose fascism without opposing capitalism during all its developmental stages. That not all capitalist nations reach their fascist "maturity" simultaneously is explained by the simple fact that their development did not start at the same time and under identical conditions. There is, however, an apparent contradiction here; for if fascism must be regarded as the direct outcome of the previous capitalist development it should appear first in the oldest and most advanced nations. But this is not the case. Russia, in which we find the most complete totalitarian system was one of the most backward nations, as was Italy which experienced the first "fascist revolution." Germany was a comparatively new and poor capitalist nation and so were Japan, Turkey, Mexico.

We may recall here that Marx together with the liberal economists thought that "the more developed nation only shows to the less developed the image of its own future."[1] History has meanwhile shown that the opposite is equally true. Whereas Marx, from his point of view, was inclined to

> "favor the free trade system, because it breaks old nationalities and carries antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie to the uttermost point and thus hastens the social revolution, while the protective system is conservative",[2]

present-day proponents of "national economy," as opposed to modern "free-traders," prove that they can "destroy old nationalities" more effectively even than can the "free play" of capitalistic forces. They have actually succeeded in carrying the "antagonism between proletariat and bourgeoisie to the uttermost point." And as far as hastening the revolution is concerned, both systems have been able equally to prevent its actual occurrence.

The specific form in which surplus labor was taken from the producers was similar in both the *laissez faire* and the protective systems. Similar, also, for all capitalist nations were the social and economic consequences which stemmed from this exploitative relationship. Outside of this relationship, however, there were great variations and gradations in the different national economies which allowed for different political structures. That

[1] *Capital.* Vol. I; p. 13.
[2] *Free Trade. An Address Delivered before the Democratic Association of Brussels.* 1848; p. 43.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the free-trade system was for a time dominant and thus the "progressive" one does not make it the capitalistic system *per se*. It could have been replaced at any time in any country by a protective system, and the change would have been not in the capitalist nature of the nation but only in its competitive methods.

The more rapidly capital accumulates, the more it becomes concentrated. Until the world war the more highly developed capitalist nations were also the more centralized. The "richer" a country was in an economic sense, however, the less urgent was its need to rule politically. In America, for instance, the powerful capitalists could ignore the government to the point where the later seemed at times to be in strict opposition to the needs of Big Business. In poor countries like Japan, the concentration of wealth was from the beginning identical with the concentration of political power. In Germany, too,

> "the government displayed all the initiative in the capitalist development that in the Western world rested almost exclusively with private capitalists."[3]

But the Western world did not shrink from state interference in the economy whenever it seemed profitable. Napoleon III, for instance, in his policies regarding free-trade and protectionism "turned to the right and then to the left and one could never tell where he was going."[4]

The high capital concentration already reached in the more "successful" nations accounts for the forced concentration of wealth and power in the more backward countries.[5] In this forced centralization we see the real international character of capitalist production which forces its weakest units to reach and overtake the richer nations. When at an earlier stage the backward nations opposed the monopolistic position of the *laissez faire* nations with monopolistic actions by way of state interferences and thus escaped economic exploitation by simply refusing to let the "market dictate" to them, they countered an effective competitive method with a still more effective one. When today the highly industrial-

---

[3] Gustav Stolper, *German Economy* 1870-1940; p. 10.

[4] Theophile Gautier; quoted by S. B. Clough in *France: A History of National Economics 1789-1939;* p. 182.

[5] The Bolshevik slogan, "to reach and overtake Western capitalism," for example, was dictated by necessity in order to escape foreign exploitation and to foster a national development that made full use of national resources and labor in the interest of a native ruling class.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ized monopolistic countries compete with capitalistically weaker nations, the latter must oppose a practically dictatorial economic policy with still greater dictatorial measures. State protection in the traditional sense is not forceful enough; complete state control is needed. And just as Hitler's rise to power coincided with the economic crisis that in 1929 spread from the United States to Europe, so also the German totalitarian state is a product of both German and world capitalism. Whoever favors American democracy necessarily also favors German fascism. In turn, the German fascists are just as responsible for the growing authoritarian tendencies in America as are Americans.[6] In brief, the "new order" cannot be divorced from the "old order."

The replacement of economic competition by open warfare, the predominance of politics over economics, which seems to distinguish the present from the past, is not new. Wars accompanied the whole capitalist development; politics have always interfered with economic activities. The expansion of capital demands an increase of exploitation and likewise the development of the conditions of exploitation. The military aspects of imperialism are as essential as its economic reasons and results. Besides, one should not be surprised, as Marx once said,

> "by the bourgeoisie's thirst for conquest. To seize things is the vital principle of every bourgeois and to take foreign provinces is after all 'taking'."[7]

The proportions in which nationally and internationally the surplus labor of the world was divided among the diverse ruling classes was to a large extent, but never absolutely, determined by exchange processes. Thus what is new in the "new order' is that the former relationship between "economic" and "extra-economic" means for appropriating and distributing the surplus labor of the world has been reversed. In this sense Gustav Stolper is right when he says that the Germany of today

"has staked her very existence on the *Blitzkrieg* technique.

[6] The *New York Times* of May 11th, 1941, quotes L. Domeratzky, trade specialist of the Department of Commerce, as saying: "Confronted by a political combination on the Continent of Europe under the domination of Germany, the *individual American entrepreneur* would hardly be strong enough to find a market for his product or service except on terms laid down by the National Socialist State; . . . the mere fact that an American product or service might be superior would not be a sufficient basis for successful export trade. . . . If we should be compelled to adopt economic self-sufficiency as a national policy, it would involve a degree of economic planning that might seriously affect some of our fundamental political institutions."

[7] *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann;* p. 114.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> On the success or failure of this technique the fate of the world depends. If it succeeds, the face of the globe will be altered beyond recognition."[8]

However, not "Germany" but the present German rulers have staked their very existence on the *Blitzkrieg* technique. Not the fate of the world, but the fate of numerous vested interests based on the *status quo* is here involved.[9] Nevertheless, it is true that situations can be altered by political measures just as well as, and at times even better than, through the "organic" development of *laissez faire* capitalism.

Competition and the Destruction of Capital

In class society the distinction between politics and economics refers to differences of method for appropriating and distributing the products taken from the producers by the owners and controllers of capital. Political methods influence economic measures and vice versa. From this point of view, the difference between state protection in the "old" order and state control in the "new" order is only a difference in degree, a quantitative change that is determined by the highly monopolistic character of capitalist society. The increase in control is an attempt to break the stagnation of the depression, i.e., the decline of competition during the crisis. It is true that the crisis itself sharpens competition. However, this intensified competition at first only hastens the decline through its destruction of capital values. Because of numerous bankruptcies the crisis leads to further capital concentration and to a situation where those enterprises which can weather the depression are once more capable of increasing the profitability of their production. *The competitive struggle, for a time fought almost exclusively in the sphere of distribution, is again fought mainly in the sphere of production.* This latter kind of competition leads to a new prosperity because it is a competition by way of capital investments.

In former depressions a number of capitalist enterprises disappeared. Those that the state did not wish to see disappear it had to support with subsidies either by government financing or

[8] *Germany Economy;* p. XIII.

[9] Eric Voegelin writes in "Some Problems of German Hegemony" (The Journal of Politics, May 1941, p. 166): "Where the revolutionary and military expansion was successful, it resulted in a radical change of personnel in all governmental key positions. . . . The measures employed . . . range from simple dismissal to detention in concentration camps, killing, and forced emigration."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

protectionist measures. Long before Hitler's ascendency in Germany, a great number of capitalist enterprises were entirely dependent upon state subsidies. The same was true to a less extent in other nations. However, the continuation of competition by way of capital investments depends on the successful destruction of capital in the sphere of distribution. National protection of capital contradicts the destructive needs of the internationally determined economy. The more the state interferes, the greater the difficulty of overcoming the depression. The deeper the depression, the greater the need for state interferences.

Furthermore, the more monopolization advanced, the less was the crisis able to serve as the destroyer of capital. The monopolies were powerful enough to safeguard themselves at the cost of the rest of society. The crisis in the traditional sense disappeared, but prosperity in the traditional sense disappeared, too. Capitalist development ceased to appear as a cycle of depression and prosperity, and economists began to ponder over the meaning of "long" and "short' waves in the business cycle. They began to speak of monopoly capitalism as a system of "imperfect competition." In short, because monopolies could not be so easily destroyed as were formerly the small enterprises, the competition that previously deepened but also overcame the depression lost its "regulative" force.

Every society is in need of regulation. If the competitive process no longer serves as the "regulator," social chaos is bound to increase. Short of the complete socialization of society, that is, the attempt to regulate production and distribution directly and consciously in accordance with social needs and desires, there is no way of bringing "order" into the prevailing society other than by a revival of competition. This fact is acknowledged by both liberal and fascist economists. The former, however, advocate the return to an earlier developmental stage; they advocate, that is, breaking up existing monopolies and reestablishing more general competition. The latter not only want, but actually bring about, the return of competition.

The liberal attempt to re-capture the past is illusory. Breaking up monopolies without altering the basis of capital production can lead only to the re-formation of monopolies. One cannot have the material basis of present-day capitalism, the widespread division

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of labor and large-scale industry, without having monopolies. The whole thing is a practical impossibility; it is the wish of the dying to live their lives all over again. Their hopes merely serve the ideological needs of monopolistic capitalism in its struggle against the totalitarian states.

A competition that serves as a "regulator" of capitalistic production and distribution can be revived only in the fascistic manner, that is, by breaking up the monopolistically-determined stagnation through still greater monopolization. Formerly the competitive struggle was waged simultaneously by competitive enterprises among themselves, by monopolistic enterprises among themselves, and by competitive against monopolistic enterprises. Likewise today the whole of the capitalist world is engaged in the competitive struggle, whether still largely competitive, outspokenly monopolistic, or already completely state-controlled. Just as previously the "initiative" was on the side of the strongest capitalists, that is, on the side of monopolies and was "ended" in their favor, so today the "initiative" is on the side of the totalitarian state as the stronger monopolistic force. The result will be the victory of fascism independent of the question of whether or not the present fascist states will be victorious in the current war. Because the fascist state is able to revive a forceful competition *it is the true representative of present-day capitalism.* It operates with all the competitive weapons at the disposal of capitalist society simultaneously and in a co-ordinated manner in both the sphere of production and the sphere of distribution. Its competitive attack is all-inclusive: economic, political, and military. In short, *present-day competition is total war.*

The Decisive Factor: The Labor Market

At present the plight of capitalist society is blamed on everything except the real cause—the capitalist system of production. Liberal economists make the appearance of state-controlled economies responsible for all the woes of the world. The "elimination of the market" in the totalitarian state and the destruction of "international free trade" they see as the beginning of the end of all civilization. Blaming extra-economic factors for the disturbances in their economy, they never seemed to notice that just as many of those factors were operative when all went well. If for-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

merly state interferences were less important, it was because capital itself was less developed.

Fascist economists, however, blame liberal economies for the prolongation of the crisis because liberal society opposes a necessary reorganization of world economy. And just as formerly monopolistic trends in capitalist society were mistaken for socializing tendencies, so, at present, fascists look upon state-control as the realization of a nationally limited socialism. Though only the fascists, and not even all of them, dare to draw this conclusion, socialists opposed to both the "old" and the "new" order find difficulty naming this new fascist society because of the apparent disappearance of "market-determined production" in the fascist states.

However, *what market* no longer determines production? Or rather, *what market* did determine production in the "old" capitalism? Bourgeois economists assume that capitalist production and distribution are regulated by the market. The market, that is, selling and buying to realize a profit, is seen as a conglomeration of competing capitalists. Their competition, it is argued, forbids extraordinary prices and thus exceptional profits. If there is a shortage of commodities of some sort, prices will rise, but only temporarily. An increased production of those commodities initiated by the great demand will reduce the price again to "normal." The price-mechanism based on competition is held to be the "regulator" of production and distribution by all economists whether they belong to the classical, marginal, or neo-classical school. The first school makes the price dependent on the "objective supply," the second on the "subjective demand," and the third on both. Even the Historical School and the Institutionalists do not deny the existence of the price-mechanism, but believe that it could, in addition, be influenced by other forces than merely those of supply and demand. On price fluctuations depend the grandeur and misery of all capitalists. Thus the price-mechanism is their only real concern.

Because the beginnings of capitalism were cumbersome, the transformation of surplus labor into capital generally went through the metamorphoses: money—commodity—money plus profit. But this historically-conditioned awkwardness cannot be taken as the essential feature of capital production. With the growth of capital,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an increasing amount of surplus labor was directly converted into capital without first having to enter the exchange process. The growth of capital implies an always greater "exchange" *in natura*, because a progressively greater part of the social labor is converted into means of production. In America, for example, during the period from 1899 to 1922, the ratio between quantities of labor and capital changed continuously

> "until in 1922 only 37 per cent as much labor was combined with each unit of capital as in 1899, and reciprocally 270 per cent as much capital combined with a unit of labor as then."[10]

This change in the "organic composition" of capital alters the whole structure of capitalism; it changes the importance and the character of the market. Because of the monopolization of capital connected with this process the control over diverse products was concentrated into fewer hands; and thus non-market distribution for purposes of capital formation became more important.[11]

The market for production goods is the market for capitalists, not the market that regulates production and consumption. With the growing interdependence of capital through concentration, cartelization, and monopolization, the capital-market contracts. Bookkeeping transactions replace market transactions. Though the reproduction process of capital is still a circulation process, the latter is no longer in need of the old market arrangements. The market is not only controlled but is slowly abolished in favor of the direct transformation of surplus labor into capital.

All other phenomena related to market relations change with the above changes. The transformation from monopolistic to governmental control of production, prices, profits, and investments; the change from tariff regulations that serve the growth of home industries to absolute control of all foreign trade; the fact that banks which previously were *mainly* credit-organizations are now *mainly* politico-economic instruments; that concentration by means of acquisition of shares, contracts, interlocking directorates is now augmented by direct political decisions—the equivalent of a combination of all previous control measures; the fact that monetary

---

[10] P. H. Douglas, *The Theory of Wages;* p. 129.

[11] Henry Ford, to use a relatively simple example, today buys less from other enterprises than he did before. He produces to a large extent his own factories, machines, tools, steel, soy beans, etc. Thus his capital grows by a more direct conversion of surplus labor into capital; that is, a growing part of his production does not enter the market at all, nor is it taken from the market.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

policy is to a larger extent used politically rather than economically; that syndicates, corporations, conventions are now enforced by governmental decree when previously they were established by both consent and force; the fact that non-profitable enterprises are now operated whereas, previously, unprofitable industries were state-supported; all this and more does not indicate the ascendancy of a new economic system. All this indicates is that the distribution of the surplus products appropriated from the workers has changed once again as it always has throughout capitalist development.

The differences between state controls in the various nations are differences only in degree.[12] Further development in this direction will make all capitalist nations once more look alike as they appeared to look during the hey-day of liberalism because nobody cared to look closer. The difference between the German Four Year Plan and the American armament program is the difference between an early start and a belated reaction to current war needs. The new government-financed enterprises in the U. S. for air-craft, aluminum, magnesium, steel and synthetic rubber production differ from the *Goering Reichswerke* only in size. In the "war of production" now waged, the difference of size will disappear or even shift in favor of the "democracies." If private property, private initiative, the profit motive and economic competition still exist in America, so do they exist in Germany. In the latter nation, it is true, they exist only by virtue of government support and toleration; but the development in America shows clearly that here, too, private property and all that goes with it become increasingly subordinated to the needs of government. The war which hastens this development is not a "state of emergency" that will disappear as soon as peace breaks out. It is the outcome of the previous "peace"; the structural changes it brings about are based just as much on previous events as on the war itself.

The fact that the capitalist market contracts until nothing is left but the buying and selling of labor power does not transform

[12]For a good description of this see Monograph No. 40 of the Temporary National Economic Committee, *Regulation of Economic Activities in Foreign Countries.* For capital concentration and monopoly control and related questions see *The Structure of the American Economy* of the National Resources Committee. Also the respective Monographs of the "Investigation of Concentration of Economic Power" by the T.N.E.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the production of exchange values into a production for use.[13] The production of "use-values" today, that is, production carried on according to the demands of crisis and war, without apparent regard for profitability, still serves only the production of profits, or rather is intended to serve such purposes. It is a sort of "investment," an advance of capital for future returns. The apparent loss, it is hoped, will be compensated for at a later date; just as many enterprisers in former times, provided they had sufficient reserves, sold below production cost in order to sell above "value" at another time. The barter system, too, has changed nothing in the capitalist manner of exchange; less labor is still bartered for more labor.[14]

These changes in market relations do not indicate the beginning of a consciously regulated social system so long as the class relations behind the market relations continue to determine production and distribution. *Class relations are market relations between capital and labor.* This market is nowhere disturbed and no one seems to have any intention of ending it. The market on which labor power is sold and bought is the *only market that determines production.* The fact that labor is no longer "free" in the sense that it was "free" in liberal capitalism, the fact that it can now be drafted whenever the state thinks it necessary, that it can be ordered from place to place just as the government sees fit, that it can no longer choose its employment at will, all these and other restrictions do not invalidate the fact that labor is also still "free" from all productive property, that its power to produce is still a commodity bought by governments at a price.

The *whole* of the capitalist market—except the market-relations between capital and labor—may disappear without affecting the capitalist form of production at all. The market-relation between capital and labor is the only capitalist relation *per se.* Short of its abolition the historically developed form of production for human exploitation that has been called capitalism cannot disappear.

---

[13]Manya Gordon in her book *Workers Before and After Lenin* (p. 180) quotes Premier Molotov as saying in 1932: "It is necessary to oppose vehemently all those who believe that socialism means production for use."

[14]According to the U. S. Department of Commerce *Economic Review of Foreign Countries in 1939 and 1940,* Germany's balance of trade, even under war conditions, has become more favorable than it was before the war. The Reich was enabled to reduce its clearing indebtedness in many countries.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Capitalism, Fascism, and the Law of Value

The classical economists, in distinction to the modern price theorists who do not care to find an objective basis for their reasoning, did not stop at the description of the supply and demand mechanism. They said that its existence proved the relevance of a "law of value" that regulated society as the law of gravity regulates the known universe.

The "law of value" means that the "value" of a commodity is determined by the labor-time socially necessary for its production. Thus the "law of supply and demand" realized an exchange of labor-time against labor-time. It saw to it that this exchange was a more or less equal one, for if one seller should succeed in getting more for less, and another should be forced to accept less for more, these occurrences were only deviations from the general rule which would not invalidate this rule. In the long run some sort of equilibrium should be observable. This equilibrium would also realize the necessary distribution of the available labor-time betwen the different branches of production that were engaged in satisfying human needs.

The Marxian critique of bourgeois economy began with a challenge of its "law of value." Marx pointed out that this law was not at all working in the manner in which the bourgeois theoreticians thought it worked. Rather, in the midst of all the accidental and ever-fluctuating exchange relations, the law of value asserts itself "like an over-riding law of nature just as the law of gravity does when a house falls about our ears."[15] It is obvious, Marx once explained,

> "that the mass of products corresponding to the different needs require different and quantitatively determined masses of the total labor of society. That this necessity of distributing social labor in definite proportions cannot be done away with is self evident. . . . What can change, in changing historical circumstances, is the *form* in which these laws operate. . . . The form in which this proportional division of labor operates in a society where the interconnection of social labor is manifested in the *private exchange* of the individual products of labor, is precisely the *exchange value* of these products."[16]

[15] *Capital.* Vol. I; p. 86.
[16] *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann;* pp. 73-74.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thus the *real value relation,* if one speaks in capitalistic terms, is the necessity for distributing social labor in definite proportions—the need for the social co-ordination of individual operations based on the social division of labor in order to satisfy human, i.e., social needs. *The capitalistic value relation* is a *specific form* of this *real "value relation."* However, in its *capitalistic form* the "law of value" cannot serve as a *continuous* "automatic regulator" that squares the social needs with the social division of labor. There never was "equality" of power and opportunity either in society or among the capitalists, there never was "equality" in the exchange process. Consequently no "regulation" could be brought about by a "law of value" that was realized through the exchange of "equal" quantities of labor.[17]

In capitalism, human necessities must first be translated into value relations before they can be realized. But *value production* is *surplus value production.* It is the profit need that determines what and how much is produced. The profit need may or may not coincide with the needs of social life. If it coincides, this is merely accidental. In brief, the class relations in society and the production of surplus value that they imply "regulate" production and distribution, supply and demand. No mysterious "invisible hand" is guiding society; it is "regulated" by the relentless permanent social war.

Because of the fact that capitalist production is profit-production, the accumulation of capital is an accumulation for the sake of accumulation. This accumulation, in turn, destroys competition. Each capitalist, in order to remain such, must fight other capitalists; the famous profit incentive is the incentive to destroy capital. The whole production, being a production to appropriate the surplus labor of the workers, is a production that *continuously disrupts the connection between social needs and capitalist needs.* Instead of mastering production, the people are mastered by production. The more capital accumulates, the more it destroys both the capacity to *continue the accumulation process* and to *maintain some sort of proportioning of the social labor* in order to secure

[17] In his book *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (p. 101) E. F. M. Durbin writes: "If hitherto industries lived by strangling each other, and benefits were gained for a section by starving, not by feeding, the whole of society, with the increase of the number of monopolized sections, even the sectional benefits diminished, as all prices rose against everybody. We came to live, not by taking in each other's washing, but by each man garroting his neighbor."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

social life. Short of the destruction of the whole capitalist system, the latter situation can be temporarily remedied only by *remedying the situation which prevents continued capital formation.* The capitalist crisis, by re-establishing a lost basis for the continuation of profit production, temporarily also re-proportioned the social labor so that society could maintain some sort of stability. The only law that asserted itself throughout the capitalist development was the *law of value in the Marxian sense,* that is, the *law of crises and collapse.* Naturally, the bourgeoisie could not admit that the only "order" to be found in their system was the disorder of the crisis. Thus they looked everywhere to discover the forces and reasons that disturbed the smooth working of the "market laws"—which explains the ridiculous but gigantic literature on economics.

If in capitalist society "the determination of the magnitude of value by labor-time is a secret, hidden under the apparent fluctuations in the relative values of commodities,"[18] the secret deepens with the development of capitalism. Though "logically" the opposite should occur, because the exchange contracts, because the number of independent producers relative to the total capital decreases, because control displaces anarchy in production and distribution, actually the demands of the law of value are violated in increasing measure. Because the number of anonymous, atomistic competitors declines and cost, sales prices, and margins are increasingly "regulated," the

> "realization of a rational economy relies on the will, insight, and abilities of the few persons who are in dictatorial command of the whole of society. Thus a decisive irrational, personal, and subjective element comes in."[19]

The reason for this increasing "irrationality" should not be looked for, however, in the abilities or lack of abilities of those who rule society dictatorially *but in the dictatorial rule itself.*

Regulation is possible only in "production by freely-associated men, and is consciously exercised by them in accordance with a settled plan."[20] But then it would be senseless to continue to speak of a "law of value." "Value is a strictly historical category; neither before nor after capitalism does there exist value produc-

[18] *Capital.* Vol. I; p. 74.
[19] H. von Beckerath. *The Philosophical Review.* Nov. 1937; p. 595.
[20] *Capital.* Vol. I; p. 92.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion."[21] As long as the means of production oppose the workers as capital, however, i.e., as long as a *third* party has control over them, these means of production can be used only to create surplus products for this third agency. So long, too, will the law of value and not planning "regulate" production and distribution.

In the controlled economy the state acts—as previously the private entrepreneur acted—as a *third factor* in addition to the two needed for production: means of production and labor. This third agency forbids, but at the same time cannot prevent, the divorce between production and social needs. The controlling position of any ruling class depends on its capacity to keep their subjects subdued and "satisfied." Just to keep them subdued would not be enough today because it would lead to a severe decline of productivity. The rulers are forced to undertake actions that secure a sort of social balance. Though each class, group, or state acts and can only act to safeguard its own interests, it is forced nevertheless to *react* to the actual social needs.[22]

Previous processes of economic and political development created a situation that endangered both the profits of a growing number of capitalists and the lives of millions of people. There was no longer in evidence any sort of "regulation" between production and distribution that allowed for even a miserable social existence. The *violated real law of value* asserted itself *capitalistically* in a gigantic crisis. It forced the ruling classes of the most depressed nations first to react to its demands and to try to bring about a distribution of social labor that allowed for both the continuation of capital accumulation and the postponement of the collapse.

However, the world is not so often radically re-divided as the productive process changes nor so often as the composition of capital is altered. Maintaining profitability in the divided world of many privileged groups, classes, nations demands re-organization by force. In the world as it is, it would help Hitler very little to declare himself not only a national but also an international socialist. Other class societies would fight him just the same. It

[21] F. Engels in a letter to Kautsky in *Aus der Fruehzeit des Marxismus;* p. 145.

[22] Hitler's rise to power, his foreign policy, and his internal program are all interdependent. To revive German imperialism, all else that has been done in Germany was also necessary—the "ending of unemployment," the increasing of state control, the rearmament program, etc., and vice versa. These actions had their repercussions because to create "social balance" in one class society is to dislocate it in another.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would not help Churchill to declare himself converted from *laissez faire* internationalism into a national socialist; the struggle between "democracy" and "fascism" would still go on.

Because it was a class society which reacted to the demands of the law of value its reaction gave new impetus and additional force to the old activities that were designed to combat depressions.

> "The general character of the action taken to meet the democratic demand arising out of the trade cycle is always the same. It is called 'planning.' It actually consists in the substitution of monopoly control for competition in all the markets and industries it touches."[23]

Once more now, the crisis is fought with still greater concentration, still more "planning," but this greater "planning" involves a greater destruction of vested interests. Because "all contradictions of the capitalist production come to the fore in the general economic world-crisis,"[24] the destruction of those vested interests demands warfare. The total war indicates that present-day society is still determined by a law of value that asserts itself like an "over-riding law of nature." Hence the inability to "understand" how the war could happen in our "civilization," and the "magnetic force" that draws nation after nation into the conflict. If any proof should be needed that the world is still a capitalistic world, the war itself is proof enough. Those nations complying with the demands of the law of value most vigorously, that is, the fascist nations, have to be appraised therefore as the *most capitalistic*.

What Is Capitalism?

It is often assumed that if it were not for the war, Hitler's production for warfare, i.e., less butter and more cannons, could be transformed into a social production, i.e., no cannons and more butter. Hitler's production is not solely "war production"; it is capitalistic production pure and simple and therefore also war production. The assumption, furthermore, that socialism might be introduced in Germany and Russia if Hitler and Stalin desired it and if it were not for the "enemy," or the "war," is senseless because all economy is world economy. These nations are not isolated; they are integrated parts of the world production and

[23] Durbin, *The Politics of Democratic Socialism;* p. 100.
[24] K. Marx, *Theorien ueber den Mehrwert;* Vol. III, p. 318.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

distribution, just as much determined by other nations as they themselves determine the rest of the world. Aside from this, the continuation of class rule in the "new order" precludes *social production.* Production is determined by the need of the ruling group to remain on top, just as previously it was determined by the need of the capitalists to increase their capital in order to remain capitalists. But, it is argued, just as the totalitarian state eliminates competition within the territory it controls; it does away with political competition by the creation of the one-party state. However, we have seen already that the "end of national competition" was no more than a necessary prerequisite for a sharpened international competition. The elimination of democracy is the prerequisite for a greater "democratic" participation in the international scramble for power positions. After all, Germany, Russia, Italy, do play a greater part in international politics than they did twenty years ago. Besides, as Stolper has remarked, "the class struggle which the party (controlling the nation) went out to suppress was only shifted into the party."[25]

The struggle of all against all has not been ended in the "new order." Private incentives are only detoured; they are now directed toward political and social positions which determine the degree to which one may participate in the enjoyment of surplus value. There are rich and poor people in the "new order";[26] exploited and exploiters, employed and unemployed, the latter being dressed in uniform and sent to their own destruction. Production for the sake of production that benefited minorities and kept majorities in misery is, in the "new order," still production for the sake of production—but only more so, because the results of human labor are destroyed faster than they are created. If formerly the products of labor—capital—only served to increase the exploitation of labor, they now serve to put the workers to death on the battlefields of the world. There is no sense in hoping that the privileged groups will on their own part change the situation in which the products of society destroy their producers. The more the privileged positions disappear, the fiercer the struggle for the remaining positions. Whoever has or believes he has an

[25] *German Economy;* p. 234.

[26] German income tax figures for 1938 disclosed an increase in the number and income of taxpayers in the highest brackets, and sharp proportional decreases among those at the lowest levels.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opportunity to reach them will struggle unless the whole basis for social privileges is done away with. This, however, can be done only by those who have never a chance to rise, that is, by the proletarian masses.

Capitalist production necessitates a social situation wherein the means of production belong to one class in society. Another class must have at its disposal nothing but its labor power. The divorce of the laborers from the means of production is the prerequisite for and the basis of capitalistic production. So far as this fundamental capitalistic relationship is concerned nothing has changed in the totalitarian systems. What has been altered is the relationship between government and individual capitalists. In the democracies, individual ownership predominates over governmental control; in the fascist states, governmental control over individual ownership. In Russia, alone, individual ownership has been done away with altogether and the state has complete control of the productive apparatus and natural resources.

The trends of development indicate that the democracies travel in the direction of fascism and the fascist nations in the direction of the Russian system. But in all these states the real basis of capitalistic production has not been abolished. However different the world may look to individual proprietors who have been displaced by governmental agencies, for the great mass of the population nothing of real importance has taken place. They have changed their masters as they changed them before in the hiring and firing process, or when they shifted from private to governmental employment. If the "fascist revolution" involves no more than the change of control of the means of production from the hands of private entrepreneurs into those of government officials, nothing new has evolved as regards the relationship between capital and labor.

The capital-labor relationship is the only one that really concerns the working class. Unable or unwilling to alter it by their own independent actions, the workers remain apathetic toward the struggle between fascism and democracy. They are not opposed to state control of the economy. So long as they are willing to work for capital at all, they are just as willing to work for the government as for private enterprises. That the workers in the democratic nations nevertheless participate in the fight against fascism is not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a sign of a genuine anti-fascism on their part. They are merely opposed to *German fascism*, that is, they are defending the capitalistic interests of their own countries. The anti-fascism angle of this struggle is only incidental; its absence would alter only some of the propaganda phrases employed.

From Liberalism to 'Statism'

Capitalists far more than the workers are affected by the recent social transformations. That this should come to them as a surprise only shows once more how little they understand their own society. Bourgeois thinkers, however, foresaw quite early what has now come to pass.[27] If their present-day heirs despise the most recent metamorphoses of the capitalist system, some of their forefathers[28] found delight in the thought that at a later day the state would not only symbolically but actually represent the "whole of society."

Capitalistic development displaced individual capitalists by organized capitalist groups; individual workers by trade or political organizations. Just as the market mechanism was increasingly disrupted through this development, so the apparatus of the state became increasingly incapable of serving under the new conditions. Additional state powers were needed to assure some sort of social stability. The *laissez faire* arguments against government power became ridiculous. The

> "question was no longer whether business could, or ought to, stop government, but among what groups the business of governing the country was to be distributed."[29]

The trend towards increasing centralization asserts itself, however, only within the chaotic interplay of various monopolies and pressure-groups. Monopolies began, either by reason of strength or

[27]Hobbes believed that a totalitarian state might be needed to secure order in the capitalist society. His *Leviathan*, writes R. H. S. Crossman (*Government and the Governed;* p. 69) "is the first democratic attack upon democracy." Hegel's discussion of the various stages of government, writes H. Marcuse (*Reason and Revolution;* p. 59) "is a concrete description of the development from liberalism to an authoritarian political system. . . . The gist of Hegel's analysis is that liberalistic society gives birth to an authoritarian state."

[28]Saint-Simon and Comte, for example, derived their optimism precisely from the authoritarian tendencies inherent in the capitalistic reproduction process. They dreamed of a conscious re-organization of society through the wisdom and intelligence of a selected ruling body which would plan and establish a desired social harmony.

[29]J. J. Robbins and G. Heckscher, "The Constitutional Theory of Autonomous Groups." *The Journal of Politics.* Vol. 3, No. 1; p. 19.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

weakness, to co-operate with the state, whose controlling powers increased correspondingly. Political pressure groups operated for or against the state, for or against other autonomous groups, or against the indirect pressure of still unorganized activities. The state—essentially a monopolistic enterprise like any other in the capitalist society—used those various forces operating in society to its own advantage.[30] In the attempt to support the monopolies the state increased its own power. In turn, "the corporations only assisted in the complete breakdown of individual freedom without winning freedom for themselves."[31] Within the general crisis conditions the state became the strongest force in society. The new and dominating position of the state monopoly within the monopolistic society allowed parties, competing for state control, to oppose both the workers and the bourgeoisie.[32] J. C. Calhoun, by the mid-nineteenth century, sounded

> "a warning against the danger to constitutional government from a corporation of politicians having a cohesive group interest and an economic base in the national treasury."[33]

Parties developed corporate interests of their own. "The existence of the state as an economic base has given the professional politicians a degree of independence from economic interest groups"[34] and has thereby prepared the way which, finally—within the general crisis conditions—led to complete control over all the economy by a party-controlled state apparatus. The politicians found little opposition[35] in the weakened bourgeoisie, because

> "one of the most important developments during the last fifty years was the separation of, and even enmity between, enter-

---

[30]Remember, for instance, the use the Roosevelt Administration made of the C.I.O. movement in order to consolidate its power, won by virtue of the depression, and to strengthen the government's position against all other groups.

[31]Robbins and Heckscher, op. cit. *The Journal of Politics.* Vol. 3, No. 1; p. 23.

[32]H. Goering writes in *Germany Reborn* (p. 67): "It will always remain Hitler's greatest merit that he did not bridge the gulf between proletariat and bourgeoisie, but filled it by hurling both Marxian parties and bourgeois parties into the abyss."

[33]Quoted by N. E. Long in *The Journal of Politics,* May 1941; p. 201.

[34]N. E. Long, "Party and Constitution." *The Journal of Politics,* May 1941; p. 202.

[35]The *New Statesman and Nation* (November 23, 1940) writes: "It is the railway shareholders who now clamor for nationalization since they know that the state must give them what is known as a 'fair return in perpetuity.' The banks are quite indifferent to such a threat of nationalization. They know they won't lose in the process, and the big executives will find a peaceful home in the Consolidated Fund. There are many captains of industry who would now like to be the Commissars of State-fostered monopolies with the same or larger incomes obtained free of risk. There is even a horrid suspicion that some Labour leaders could be flattered by the offer of such posts."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prise and property. The development of the stock company is partly responsible for this; even more responsible however, is the increasing indebtedness of the enterprises. The latter really no longer belonged to the entrepreneurs."[36]

To speak of a difference between property and state was only another way of saying that the division of surplus value was still largely determined by a decentralized competition. It is now determined by a centralized competition. Those who lose in this sharpened competition see in the "new order" not only a new arrangement in the distribution of surplus value but the end of all social life because it means the end of *their capitalistic existence.* Those who win in this battle will pose as the creators of a "new society," a better society, for it is a society that does secure *for them* a better capitalistic existence. For the workers, however, no *new* problem arises. Their goal remains the establishment of a *direct unity* between production and consumption and thus the abolition of the existence of a separate class or political group that controls capital and exploits labor.

[36]E. Wagemann, *Wirtschaftspolitische Strategie;* p. 341.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

William Carlos Williams

AN EXULTATION

England, confess your sins! toward the poor,
upon the body of my grandmother. Let the agents
of destruction purify you with bombs, cleanse
you of the profits of your iniquities to the last
agony of relinquishment.
She didn't die! Neither shall you, if
day by day you learn through abnegation
as she did, to send up thanks to those who
rain fire upon you.
Thanks! thanks to a just and kind heaven
for this light that comes as a blasting fire
destroying the rottenness of your slums as well
as your most noble and historic edifices, never
to be replaced!
If! You will survive if—you accept it with
thanks when, like her, excoriated by devils
you will have preserved in the end, as she did,
a purity—to be that never as yet known
leader and regenerator of nations, even of those
rotten to the core, who by a sovereignty
they cannot comprehend
have worked this cleansing mystery upon you.

FOOTNOTE TO "AN EXULTATION"

My English grandmother of whom I know very little, as I know very little of any of my forebears, herself told me at least this much: That she had been an orphan who was adopted by a "rich" family of Godwins living in London. They brought her up. Something then happened, she always kept it a mystery, which caused her to leave them. Perhaps they threw her out. In any case she came to America with my father a five-year-old child, intending to go "on the stage" but married instead, etc., etc. The point is she always carried a deep seated resentment against those who had treated her so badly in the country of her birth saying, that if she had had her

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rights things would have been very different. I have inherited her resentment against England, taking part with all those who have carried Empire on their shoulders and been given slums to live in for their pains. I have always hated the English ruling class and as a result feel that, in many ways, whatever England gets now is a just retribution. But, at heart, I am in great part proud of my English blood and so you have the whole picture. Perhaps it should be added that my contempt for and distrust of T. S. Eliot and all he does and says comes from the feeling I have that he and others like him have allied themselves with that part of the English character which unless it is cleansed by an economic and therefore spiritual hurricane will destroy that which I, in a way very different from theirs, profoundly love.—W. C. WILLIAMS, June 1, 1941.

Marianne Moore

HE "DIGESTETH HARDE YRON"

Although the aepyornis
or roc that lives in Madagascar, and
  the moa are extinct,
  the camel-sparrow, linked
with them in size—the large sparrow
Xenophon saw walking by
    a stream—was and is
    a symbol of justice.

This bird watches his chicks with
a maternal concentration, after
  he has sat on the eggs
  at night six weeks, his legs
their only weapon of defense.
He is swifter than a horse;
    he has a foot hard
    as a hoof; the leopard

is not more suspicious. How
could he, prized for plumes and eggs and young,
  even as a riding- used
  beast, respect men hiding

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

actorlike in ostrich-skins, with
the right hand making the neck move
as if alive and
from a bag the left hand

strewing grain, that ostriches
might be decoyed and killed! Yes this is he
whose plume was anciently
the plume of justice; he
whose comic duckling head on its
great neck, revolves with compass-
needle nervousness,
when he stands guard, in S-

like foragings as he is
preening the down on his leaden-skinned back.
The egg piously shown
as Leda's very own
from which Castor and Pollux hatched,
was an ostrich-egg. And what
could have been more fit
for the Chinese lawn it

grazed on, as a gift to an
emperor who admired strange birds, than this
one who builds his mud-made
nest in dust yet will wade
in lake or sea till only the
head shows. A nervous restless
bird that flees at sight
of danger, he feigns flight

to save his chicks, decoying
his decoyers; never known to hide his
head in sand, yet lagging
when he must, and dragging
an as-if-wounded wing. The friend
of hippotigers and wild
asses, it is as
though schooled by them he was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the best of the unflying
pegasi, since the Greeks "caught a few wild
  asses but no ostrich;"
  quadrupedlike bird which
flies on feet not wings,—his moth-silk
plumage wilted by his speed;
      mobile wings and tail
      behaving as a sail.

Six hundred ostrich-brains served
at one banquet, the ostrich-plume-tipped tent
  and desert spear, jewel-
  gorgeous ugly egg-shell
goblets, eight pairs of ostriches
in harness, dramatize a
      meaning always missed
      by the externalist.

The power of the visible
is the invisible; as even where
  no tree of freedom grows,
  so-called brute courage knows.
Heroism is exhausting, yet
it contradicts a greed that
      did not wisely spare
      the harmless solitaire

or great auk in its grandeur;
unsolicitude having swallowed up
  all giant birds but an
  alert gargantuan
little-winged, magnificently
speedy running-bird. This one
      remaining rebel
      is the sparrow-camel.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

London Letter

London NW 8
April 15, 1941

Dear Editors,

As you see by the above date, I only received your letter a month after it was sent, so there is not much hope of my getting a reply to you by April 20th. I expect this will reach you before June, however. I will try to make some sort of answer to all your questions, but I should go over the allotted space if I answered them all in full, so I will concentrate on the ones I know most about. You don't mention anything in my previous letter having been blacked out by the censor, so I presume I can speak fairly freely.*

1. *What is the level and tone of the popular press these days? How much real information about the war effort comes out? How fully are strikes and labor troubles reported? Debates in Parliament? How dominant is the propaganda note? Is this propaganda mostly anti-Hun and jingoistic flag-waving as in the last war, or is it more anti-fascist? What about the radio? Cinema?*

The tone of the popular press has improved out of recognition during the last year. This is especially notable in the *Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Pictorial* ("tabloid" papers of vast circulation, read largely by the army), and the Beaverbrook papers, the *Daily Express*, *Sunday Express* and *Evening Standard*. Except for the *Daily Mail* and certain Sunday papers these used to be the most lowbrow section of the press, but they have all grown politically serious, while preserving their "stunt" make-up, with screaming headlines, etc. All of them print articles which would have been considered hopelessly above their readers' heads a couple of years ago, and the *Mirror* and the *Standard* are noticeably "left." The *Standard* is the least important of Beaverbrook's three papers, and he has apparently taken his eye off it and left its direction almost entirely to young journalists of leftwing views who are allowed to say what they like so long as they don't attack the boss directly. Nearly the whole of the press is now "left" compared with what it was before Dunkirk—even the *Times* mumbles about the need for centralised ownership and greater social equality—and to find any straightforward expression of reactionary opinions, i.e. reactionary in the old pre-Fascist sense, you now have to go to obscure weekly and monthly papers, mostly Catholic papers. There is an element of eyewash in all this, but it is partly due to the fact that the decline in the trade in consumption goods has robbed the advertisers of much of their power over editorial policy. Ultimately this will bankrupt the newspapers and compel the State to take them over, but at the moment they are in an

*Neither in this nor in Mr. Orwell's last letter did the British censor make any deletions.—Ed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

interim period when they are controlled by journalists rather than advertisers, which is all to the good for the short time it will last.

As to accuracy of news, I believe this is the most truthful war that has been fought in modern times. Of course one only sees enemy newspapers very rarely, but in our own papers there is certainly nothing to compare with the frightful lies that were told on both sides in 1914-18 or in the Spanish civil war. I believe that the radio, especially in countries where listening-in to foreign broadcasts is not forbidden, is making large-scale lying more and more difficult. The Germans have now sunk the British navy several times over in their published pronouncements, but don't otherwise seem to have lied much about major events. When things are going badly our own government lies in a rather stupid way, withholding information and being vaguely optimistic, but generally has to come out with the truth within a few days. I have it on very good authority that reports of air-battles, etc., issued by the Air Ministry are substantially truthful, though of course favourably coloured. As to the other two fighting services I can't speak. I doubt whether labour troubles are really fully reported. News of a large-scale strike would probably never be suppressed, but I think you can take it that there is a strong tendency to pipe down on labour friction, and also on the discontent caused by billeting, evacuation, separation allowances for soldiers' wives, etc., etc. Debates in Parliament are probably not misrepresented in the press, but with a House full of deadheads they are growing less and less interesting and only about four newspapers now give them prominence.

Propaganda enters into our lives more than it did a year ago, but not so grossly as it might. The flag-waving and Hun-hating is absolutely nothing to what it was in 1914-18, but it is growing. I think the majority opinion would now be that we are fighting the German people and not merely the Nazis. Vansittart's hate-Germany pamphlet, *Black Record*, sold like hot cakes. It is idle to pretend that this is simply something peculiar to the bourgeoisie. There have been very ugly manifestations of it among the common people. Still, as wars go, there has been remarkably little hatred so far, at any rate in this country. Nor is "anti-fascism," of the kind that was fashionable during the Popular Front period, a strong force yet. The English people have never caught up with that. Their war morale depends more on old-fashioned patriotism, unwillingness to be governed by foreigners, and simple inability to grasp when they are in danger.

I believe that the B.B.C., in spite of the stupidity of its foreign propaganda and the unbearable voices of its announcers, is very truthful. It is generally regarded here as more reliable than the press. The movies seem almost unaffected by the war, i.e., in technique and subject-matter. They go on and on with the same treacly rubbish, and when they do touch on politics they are years behind the popular press and decades behind the average book.

2. *Is there any serious writing being done? Is there any anti-war*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

literature like Barbusse, etc., in the last war? Over here we hear there is a tendency towards romanticism and escapism in current British writing. Is this true?

So far as I know, nothing of consequence is being written, except in fragmentary form, diaries and short sketches for instance. The best novels I have read during the past year were either American or translations of foreign books written several years earlier. There is much production of anti-war literature, but of a one-eyed irresponsible kind. There is nothing corresponding to the characteristic war-books of 1914-18. All of those in their different ways depended on a belief in the unity of European civilization, and generally on a belief in international working-class solidarity. That doesn't exist any longer—Fascism has killed it. No one believes any longer that a war can be stopped by the workers on both sides simultaneously refusing to fight. To be effectively anti-war in England now one has to be pro-Hitler, and few people have the intellectual courage to be that, at any rate wholeheartedly. I don't see why good books shouldn't be written from the pro-Hitler angle, but none are appearing as yet.

I don't see any tendency to escapism in current literature, but I believe that if any major work were now produced it *would* be escapist, or at any rate subjective. I infer this from looking into my own mind. If I could get the time and mental peace to write a novel now, I should want to write about the past, the pre-1914 period, which I suppose comes under the heading of "escapism."

3. *What is the morale of the regular army like? Is there any tendency towards more democracy? Is it, so to speak, a* British *army primarily, or an* anti-fascist *army—like the Loyalist army in Spain?*

I believe that the morale of the army is very good in a fighting sense but that there is much discontent about low separation-allowances and class-privilege in the matter of promotion, and that the troops in England are horribly bored by the long inaction, the dully muddy camps where they have spent the winter while their families were being bombed in the big towns, and the stupidity of a military system which was designed for illiterate mercenaries and is now being applied to fairly well-educated conscripts. It is still primarily a "non-political" British army. But there are now regular classes in political instruction, and subject to local variation, depending on the commander of the unit, there seems to be a good deal of freedom of discussion. As to "tendency towards democracy," I should say that there is probably less than there was a year ago, but that if one looks back five years the advance is enormous. On active service the officers now wear almost the same uniform as the men (battledress), and some of them habitually wear this on home service. The practice of saluting officers in the street has largely lapsed. New drafts of recruits all have to pass through the ranks and promotion is theoretically on merit alone, but the official claim, based on this, that the army is now entirely democratic should not be taken seriously. The framework of regular

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

officers is still there and newcomers tend to be promoted on social grounds, with, no doubt, an eye to political reliability. But all this will gradually change if the war goes on. The need for able men will be too great, and the difference between the middle class and the better paid working class is now too small, for at any rate the lower ranks of the army to remain on a class basis. The disasters now probably ahead of us may push the process of democratisation forward, as the disaster in Flanders did a year ago.

4. *We read your interesting article in a recent* Tribune *on the Home Guards. Could you tell us something of the present status of the movement? Is Wintringham the moving force behind it still? Is it most a middle-class or a working-class army? How democratic is it today?*

The Home Guard is the most anti-Fascist body existing in England at this moment, and at the same time is an astonishing phenomenon, a sort of People's Army officered by Blimps. The rank and file are predominantly working-class, with a strong middle-class seasoning, but practically all the commands are held by wealthy elderly men, a lot of whom are utterly incompetent. The Home Guard is a part-time force, practically unpaid, and at the beginning it was organised, I think consciously and intentionally, in such a way that a working-class person would never have enough spare time to hold any post above that of sergeant. Just recently the higher positions have been stuffed with retired generals, admirals and titled dugouts of all kinds. Principal age-groups of the rank and file are between 35 and 50 or under 20. Officers from Company Commander (captain) upwards are much older on average, sometimes as old as seventy.

Given this set-up you can imagine the struggle that has gone on between the blimpocracy, wanting a parade-ground army of pre-1914 type, and the rank and file wanting, though less articulately, a more democratic type of force specialising in guerilla methods and weapons. The controversy has never been overtly political but has turned upon technical points of organisation, discipline and tactics, all of which, of course, have political implications which are half-consciously grasped on both sides. The War Office has been fairly open-minded and helpful, but I think it is true to say that the higher ranks within the Home Guard have fought steadily against a realistic view of war and that all experimentation and attempts at serious training have been due to proddings from below. Wintringham and some of his associates are still at the Home Guard training school (started unofficially by the weekly Picture Post and afterwards taken over by the War Office), but the Wintringham ("People's Army") school of thought has lost ground during the past six months. It or something like it will probably gain ground again during the coming months, and Wintringham has had very great influence, as thousands of men from all parts of the country have passed through his hands in three-day training courses. Although the Home Guard is now more similar to the regular army, or rather to the pre-war Territorials, than it was when

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it began, it is much more democratic and consciously anti-Fascist than some of its commanders would wish. It has several times been rumoured that the government was growing nervous about it and contemplated disbanding it, but no move has been made to do this. A very important point, technically necessary to a force of this kind but only obtained after a struggle, is that the men keep their rifles and usually some ammunition in their own homes. The officers wear practically the same uniform as the men and there is no saluting off parade. Although the class nature of the command is widely grasped there has not been much friction. Within the lower ranks the spirit is extremely democratic and comradely, with an absence of snobbishness and class-uneasiness that would have been unthinkable ten years ago. I speak from experience here as I serve in a mixed residential area where factory-workers and quite rich men march in the ranks together. In general the political outlook of the men is old-fashioned patriotism mixed up with ill-defined but genuine hatred of the Nazis. Jews are numerous in the London units. In general, I think the danger of the Home Guard being turned into a reactionary middle-class militia still exists, but that this is not now likely to happen.

5. *How aggressive and articulate is big-business reaction today (not Mosley's black shirts, but the more solid and serious forces of big capital)? You mention a political swing to the right in the Churchill government of late months. Does this mean the forces of organised business are climbing back into the saddle?*

I don't know what is going on behind the scenes and can only answer this question very generally, thus: Laissez-faire capitalism is dead in England and can't revive unless the war ends within the next few months. Centralised ownership and planned production are bound to come. The whole question is who is to be in control. The recent rightward swing means that we are being regimented by wealthy men and aristocrats rather than by representatives of the common people. They will use their power to keep the structure of government on a class basis, manipulate taxation and rationing in their own favour, and avoid a revolutionary war-strategy; but not to return to capitalism of the old chaotic kind. The swing of the past six months hasn't meant more economic freedom or profits for the individual business-man—quite the contrary; but it has meant that you are less likely to get an important job unless you have been to one of the right schools. I have given elsewhere my reasons for thinking that this tendency will change, but that *has* been the tendency since last autumn.

6. *Would you say that Bevin and Morrison still command the support of the British working class? Are there any other Labour Party politicians who have taken on new dimensions in the course of the war—assuming those two have? Is the shop steward movement still growing?*

I know very little of industrial matters. I should say that Bevin does command working-class support and Morrison probably not. There is a widespread feeling that the Labour Party as a whole has simply abdicated. The only other Labour man whose reputation has grown is Cripps. If

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Churchill should go, Cripps and Bevin are tipped as the likeliest men for the premiership, with Bevin evidently favourite.

7. *How do you explain what, over here, seems to be the remarkable amount of democracy and civil liberties preserved during the war? Labor pressure? British tradition? Weakness of the upper classes?*

"British tradition" is a vague phrase, but I think it is the nearest answer. I suppose I shall seem to be giving myself a free advert., but may I draw attention to a recent book of mine, *The Lion and the Unicorn* (I believe copies have reached the U.S.A.)? In it I pointed out that there is in England a certain feeling of family loyalty which cuts across the class system (also makes it easier for the class system to survive, I am afraid) and checks the growth of political hatred. There *could*, I suppose, be a civil war in England, but I have never met any English person able to imagine one. At the same time one ought not to overrate the amount of freedom of the intellect existing here. The position is that in England there is a great respect for freedom of speech but very little for freedom of the press. During the past twenty years there has been much tampering, direct and indirect, with the freedom of the press, and this has never raised a flicker of popular protest. This is a lowbrow country and it is felt that the printed word doesn't matter greatly and that writers and such people don't deserve much sympathy. On the other hand the sort of atmosphere in which you daren't talk politics for fear that the Gestapo may be listening isn't thinkable in England. Any attempt to produce it would be broken not so much by conscious resistance as by the inability of ordinary people to grasp what was wanted of them. With the working classes, in particular, grumbling is so habitual that they don't know when they are grumbling. Where unemployment can be used as a screw, men are often afraid of expressing "red" opinions which might get round to the overseer or the boss, but hardly anyone would bother, for instance, about being overheard by a policeman. I believe that an organisation now exists for political espionage in factories, pubs, etc., and of course in the army, but I doubt whether it can do more than report on the state of public opinion and occasionally victimise some individual held to be dangerous. A foolish law was passed some time back making it a punishable offence to say anything "likely to cause alarm and despondency" (or words to that effect). There have been prosecutions under it, a few score I should say, but it is practically a dead letter and probably the majority of people don't know of its existence. You can hardly go into a pub or railway carriage without hearing it technically infringed, for obviously one can't discuss the war seriously without making statements which *might* cause alarm. Possibly at some time a law will be passed forbidding people to listen-in to foreign radio stations, but it will never be enforcible.

The British ruling class believe in democracy and civil liberty in a narrow and partly hypocritical way. At any rate they believe in the *letter* of the law and will sometimes keep to it when it is not to their advantage. They show no sign of developing a genuinely Fascist mentality. Liberty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of every kind must obviously decline as a result of war, but given the present structure of society and social atmosphere there is a point beyond which the decline cannot go. Britain may be fascised from without or as a result of some internal revolution, but the old ruling class can't, in my opinion, produce a genuine totalitarianism of their own. Not to put it on any other grounds, they are too stupid. It is largely because they have been unable to grasp the first thing about the nature of Fascism that we are in this mess at all.

8. *From over here, it looks as though there had been a very rapid advance towards a totalitarian war economy in the last few months—rationing spreading wider, Bevin's conscription of certain classes of workers, extension of government controls over business. Is this impression correct? Is the tempo growing more or less rapid? How does the man in the street feel about the efficiency of the war effort? How much does he feel in his daily life the effect of these measures?*

Yes, the thing is already happening at great speed and will accelerate enormously in the coming months. In a very little while we shall all be in uniform or doing some kind of compulsory labour, and probably eating communally. I don't believe it will meet with much opposition so long as it hits all classes equally. The rich will squeal, of course—at present they are manifestly evading taxation, and the rationing barely affects them —but they will be brought to heel if the predicament is really desperate. I don't believe that the ordinary man cares a damn about the totalitarianisation of our economy, as such. People like small manufacturers, farmers and shopkeepers seem to accept their transition from small capitalists to State employees without much protest, provided that their livelihood is safeguarded. People in England hate the idea of a Gestapo, and there has been a lot of opposition, some of it successful, to official snooping and persecution of political dissidents, but I don't believe economic liberty has much appeal any longer. The change-over to a centralised economy doesn't seem to be altering people's way of life nearly so much as the shift of population, and mingling of classes, consequent on conscription and the bombing. But this may be less true in the industrial North, where on the whole people are working much harder in more trying conditions, and unemployment has practically ceased. What the reaction will be when we begin to experience hunger, as we may within the next few months, I don't prophecy. Apart from the bombing, and the overworking of certain categories of workers, one cannot honestly say that this war has caused much hardship as yet. The people still have more to eat than most European peoples would have in peacetime.

9. *What war aims does the left-and-labour movement now agree on? How sanguine are you about these aims being carried out? How much pressure is there now on the Government to proclaim Socialist war aims? On the question of war aims, of policy towards Europe and Germany in the event of victory, does there seem to be any radical difference between the Labor and Tory members of the Churchill Government? How definite are the plans for the "social rebuilding" of England after the war?*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I haven't space to answer this question properly, but I think you can take it that the Labour Party, as such, has now no policy genuinely independent of the Government. Some people even think that the left Conservatives (Eden, and possibly Churchill) are more likely to adopt a Socialist policy than the Labour men. There are constant appeals to the Government to declare its war-aims, but these come from individuals and are not the official act of the Labour Party. There is no sign that the Government has any detailed or even general post-war plan. Nevertheless the feeling that after the war "things will be different" is so widespread that though, of course, the future England may be *worse* than that of the past, a return to Chamberlain's England is not thinkable even if it is technically possible.

10. *Would you say that the masses, working-class and middle-class, are more or less enthusiastically behind the present Government than in May 1940? Are they more or less behind the war effort in general?*

So far as the Government goes, less enthusiastically, but not very greatly so. This government came in with a degree of popular support which is quite unusual. In its home policy it has disappointed expectations, but not so grossly as governments usually do. Churchill's personal popularity will have waned somewhat, but he still has a bigger following than any premier of the last twenty years. As to the war, I don't believe there is much variation. People are fed up, but nothing to what one might expect. But one can't speak with certainty of this till after the coming crisis, which will be of a different nature, less intelligible, perhaps harder to bear, than that of a year ago.

I hope that answers your questions. It is a bit over the length you allowed me, I am afraid. All well here, or fairly well. We had hell's own bombing last night, huge fires raging all over the place and a racket of guns that kept one awake half the night. But it doesn't matter, the hits were chiefly on theatres and fashionable shops, and this morning it is a beautiful spring day, the almond trees are in blossom, postmen and milk-carts wandering to and fro as usual, and down at the corner the inevitable pair of fat women gossipping beside the pillar-box. The best of luck to you all.

POSTSCRIPT (May 15, 1941)

The chief events since I wrote on April 15th have been the British defeats in Lybia and Greece, and the general worsening of the situation in the Middle East, with Irak in revolt, Stalin evidently preparing to go into closer partnership with Hitler and Darlan getting ready to let German troops into Syria. There has also, within the last two days, been the mysterious arrival of Hess, which has caused much amusement and speculation but which it is too early to comment on.

The question that matters is whether the disastrous turn the war has taken will lead to a further growth of democratic sentiment, as happened

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

last year. I am afraid one must say that the chances are against this. The reason why the Dunkirk campaign and the collapse of France impressed public opinion, and did a great deal of good, was that these things were happening close at hand. There was the immediate threat of invasion, and there were the soldiers coming home in hundreds of thousands to tell their families how they had been let down. This time the thing is happening far away, in countries that the average person neither knows nor cares anything about—the ordinary British working man hasn't the faintest notion that the Suez canal has anything to do with his own standard of living—and if the troops who got away from Greece have tales to tell they are telling them in Egypt and Palestine. Also, no one expected the Greek campaign to be anything but a disaster. Long before any official announcement was made it was known that we had troops in Greece, and I could find no one of whatever kind who believed that the expedition would be successful; on the other hand, nearly everyone felt that it was our duty to intervene. It is generally recognized that as yet, i.e. until we have an up-to-date army, we can't fight the Germans on the continent of Europe, but at the same time "we couldn't let the Greeks down." The English people have never been infected with power-worship and don't feel the futility of this sort of gesture as a continental people probably would. I can see no sign anywhere of any big swing of opinion. In the parliamentary debate on the Greek campaign the attack on the government was led by envious throw-outs like Lloyd George, and instead of being a proper discussion the debate was easily twisted into a demand for a vote of confidence, which on the whole the government deserves—at any rate it deserves it in the sense that no alternative government is at present possible. The repercussions which are probably happening in Australia, however, may do something towards democratising the conduct of the war. People here are beginning to say that the next leftward push must come from America. It is suggested, for instance, that Roosevelt might make it a condition of further help that the British government do something about India. You are better able than I am to judge whether this is likely.

The air raids continue. To the ordinary people this is the part of the war that matters, in fact it *is* the war, but their stolidity is surprising. There was a sidelight on the popular mind which probably did not get into the American press, and which may interest you, in a recent by-election in Birmingham. A dissident Conservative who called himself a "reprisals candidate" ran against the government's nominee. His claim was that we should concentrate on bombing German civilians to avenge what has been done here. Canon Stuart Morris, one of the leading lights in the Peace Pledge Union, also ran on a pacifist ticket. The respective slogans of the three candidates were "Bomb Berlin," "Stop the War" and "Back Churchill." The government man got about 15,000 votes and the other two about 1500 each. The whole poll was probably low, but considering the times we live in I think these figures are encouraging.

GEORGE ORWELL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MAN IN THE BROOKS BROTHERS SHIRT

(*Continued from page 288*)

out in the club car, from stupidity, but from a restless and perennially hopeful curiosity.

Actually, she decided, it was the combination of provincialism and adventurousness that did the trick. This man *was* the frontier, though the American frontier had closed, she knew, forever, somewhere out in Oregon in her father's day. Her father, when that door had shut, had remained on the inside. In his youth, as she had learned to her surprise, from some yellowed newspaper clippings her aunt had forgotten in an old bureau drawer, he had been some kind of wildcat radical, full of workmen's compensation laws and state ownership of utilities; but he had long ago hardened into a corporation lawyer, Eastern style. She remembered how once she had challenged him with those clippings, thinking to shame him with the betrayal of ideals and how calmly he had retorted, "Things were different then." "But you fought the *railroads,*" she had insisted. "And now you're their lawyer." "You had to fight the railroads in those days," he had answered innocently, and her aunt had put in, with her ineffable plebeian sententiousness, "Your father always stands for what is right." But she saw now that her father had honestly perceived no contradiction between the two sets of attitudes, which was the real proof that it was not he, so much as the times, that had changed.

Yet this man she was sitting with had somehow survived, like a lonely dinosaur, from that former day. It was not even a true survival, for if he was, as he said, forty-one, that would make him thirty years younger than her father, and he would be barely able to recall the Golden Age of American imperialism, to which, nevertheless, he plainly belonged. Looking at him, she thought of other young empires and recalled the Roman busts in the Metropolitan, marble faces of business men, shockingly rugged and modern and recognizable after the smooth tranquillity of the Greeks. Those early business men had been omnivorous, too, great readers, eaters, travelers, collectors, and, at the beginning, provincial also, small-town men newly admitted into world-citizenship, faintly uneasy but feeling their oats.

In the course of this analysis she had glided all the way from aversion to tenderness. She saw the man now as a man without a country, and felt a desire to reinstate him. But where? The best she could do was communicate to him a sense of his own isolation and grandeur. She could ensconce him in the dignity of sadness.

Meanwhile, the man had grown almost boisterously merry. It was late afternoon; the lunch things had long ago been taken away; and the bottle was nearly empty. Outside the flat yellow farm-land went by, comfortably dotted with haystacks; the drought and the cow-bones strewn over the Dust Bowl seemed remote as a surrealist painting. Other passengers still paused to look in at the open door on their way to the club car, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the girl was no longer fully aware of them: they existed, as it were, only to give the perspective, to deepen that warm third dimension that had been established within the compartment. The man was lit up with memories of the war, droll stories of horse-play and drinking parties, a hero who was drowned while swimming in a French river, trips to Paris, Notre Dame, and target-practice in the Alps. It had been, she could see, an extension of college days, a sort of lower-middle-class Grand Tour, a wonderful male rough-house that had left a man such as this with a permanent homesickness for fraternity and a loneliness that no stag party could quite ease.

"I suppose I'm boring you," said the man, still smiling to himself, "but—it's a funny thing to say—I haven't had such a good time since the war. So that you remind me of it, and I can't stop talking, I don't know why."

"*I* know," she said, full of gentle omniscience. (This was her best side, and she knew it. But did that spoil it, keep it from being good?) "It's because you've made a new friend, and you probably haven't made one for twenty years, not since the war. Nobody does, after they've grown-up."

"Maybe so," said the man. "Getting married, no matter how many times you do it, isn't the same thing. If you even *think* you'd like to marry a girl, you have to start lying to her. It's a law of nature, I guess. You have to protect yourself. I don't mean about cheating—that's small potatoes. . . ."

A meditative look absorbed his face. "Jesus Christ," he said, "I don't even *know* Leonie any more, and vice versa, but that's the way it ought to be. A man doesn't want his wife to understand him. That's not her job. Her job is to have a nice house and nice kids and give good parties he can have his friends to. If Leonie understood me, she wouldn't be able to do that. Probably we'd both go to pot."

Tears came to her eyes again. The man's life and her own life seemed unutterably tragic.

"I was in love with my husband," she said. "We understood each other. He never had a thought he didn't tell me."

"But you got a divorce," said the man. "Somebody must have misunderstood somebody else *somewhere* along the line."

"Well," she admitted, "maybe he *didn't* understand *me* so well. He was awfully surprised. . . ." She giggled like a soubrette. The giggle was quite out of character at the moment, but she had not been able to resist it. Besides (she was sure) it was these quick darts and turns, these flashing inconsistencies that gave her the peculiar, sweet-sour, highly volatile charm that was her *specialité de la maison.*

"Surprised when you picked up with somebody else?" asked the man.

She nodded.

"What happened to that?"

"After I got divorced, I didn't want to marry him any more."

"So now you're on your own?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The question seemed almost idle, but she replied in a distinct, emphatic voice, as if he were deaf and she had an important message for him.

"No," she said. "I'm going to be married in the fall."

"Are you in love with this one?"

"Oh, yes," she said. "He's charming. And he and I are much more alike than Jim and I were. He's a little bit of a bum and I am too. And he's selfish, which is a good thing for me. Jim was so *good*. And so vulnerable. The back of his neck was just like a little boy's. I always remember the back of his neck."

She spoke earnestly, but she saw that the man did not understand. Nobody had ever understood—and she herself did not quite know—why this image retained such power over her, why all her feelings of guilt and shame had clustered around the picture of a boyish neck (the face had not been boyish, but prematurely lined) bared like an early martyr's for the sword. "How could I have done it?" she whispered to herself again, as she still did nearly every day, and once again she was suffused with horror.

"He was too good for me," she said at last. "I felt like his mother. Nobody would ever have known it, but he needed to be protected."

That was it. That was what was so awful. Nobody would ever have known. But she had crawled into his secret life and nestled there, like the worm in the rose. How warm and succulent it had been! And when she had devoured it all, she had gone away. "Oh God," she muttered under her breath. It was no excuse that she had loved him. The worm indubitably loves the rose.

Hurriedly, to distract herself, she began to talk about her love affairs. First names with thumbnail descriptions rolled out till her whole life sounded to her like a drugstore novel. And she found herself over-anxious to explain to him why in each case the thing had not borne fruit, how natural it was that she should have broken with John, how reasonable that she should never have forgiven Ernest. It was as if she had been a prosecuting attorney drawing up a brief against each of her lovers, and, not liking the position, she was relieved when the man interrupted her.

"Seems to me," he said, "you're still in love with that husband of yours."

"Do you think so really?" she asked, leaning forward. "Why?" Perhaps at last she had found him, the one she kept looking for, the one who could tell her what she was really like. For this she had gone to palmists and graphologists, hoping not for a dark man or a boat trip, but for some quick blaze of gypsy insight that would show her her own lineaments. If she once knew, she had no doubt that she could behave perfectly; it was merely a question of finding out. How, she thought, can you act upon your feelings if you don't know what they are? As a little girl whispering to a young priest in the confessional she had sometimes felt sure. The Church could classify it all for you. If you talked or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

laughed in church, told lies, had impure thoughts or conversations, you were bad; if you obeyed your parents or guardians, went to confession and communion regularly, said prayers for the dead, you were good. Protestants, like her father, were neutral; they lived in a gray world beyond good and evil. But when as a homely high-school girl, she had rejected the Church's filing system, together with her aunt's illiterate morality, she had given away her sense of herself. For a while she had believed that it was a matter of waiting until you grew older and your character was formed; then you would be able to recognize it as easily as a photograph. But she was now twenty-four, and had heard other people say she had a strong personality; she herself however was still in the dark. This hearty stranger in the green shirt—perhaps he could really tell whether she was in love with her husband. It was like the puzzle about the men with marks on their foreheads: A couldn't know whether his own forehead was marked, but B and C knew, of course, and he could, if he were bright, deduce it from their behavior.

"Well," replied the man, "of all the fellows you've talked about, Jim's the only one I get a picture of. Except your father—but that's different; he's the kind of a man I know about."

The answer disappointed her. It was too plain and folksy to cover the facts. It was true that she had loved her husband *personally*, for himself, and this had never happened to her with any one else. Nobody else's idiosyncrasies had ever warmed her; nobody else had she ever watched asleep. Yet that kind of love had, unfortunately, rendered her impotent to love him in the ordinary way, had, in fact, made it necessary for her to be unfaithful to him, and so, in the course of time, to leave him altogether. Or could it not be put in another way? Could she not say that all that conjugal tenderness had been a brightly packaged substitute for the Real Thing, for the long carnal swoon she had never quite been able to execute in the marriage bed? She had noticed that in those households where domesticity burns brightest and the Little Attentions rain most prodigally, the husband is seldom admitted to his real conjugal rights.

But it was impossible to explain this to the man. Already the conversation had dropped once or twice into ribaldry, but she was determined to preserve the decorum of the occasion. It was dark outside now and the waiter was back again, serving little brook trout on plates that had the Union Pacific's crest on them. Yet even as she warned herself how impossible it was, she heard her voice rushing on in a torrent of explicitness. (This had all happened so many times before, ever since, as a schoolgirl, she had exchanged dirty jokes with the college boys from Eugene and seen them stop the car and lunge at her across the gearshift. While all the time, she commiserated with herself, she had merely been trying to be a good fellow, to show that she was sophisticated and grown-up, and not to let them suspect (oh, never!) that her father did not allow her to go out with boys and that she was a neophyte, a helpless fledgling, with no small talk and no coquetry at all. It had not been *fair* (she could still italicize it,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bitterly) for them to tackle her like a football dummy; she remembered the struggles back and forth on the slippery leather seats of sports roadsters, the physical awkwardness of it all being somehow the crowning indignity; she remembered also the rides home afterwards, and how the boy's face would always be sullen and closed—he was thinking that he had been cheated, made a fool of, and resolving never to ask her again, so that she would finally become notorious for being taken out only once. How indecent and anti-human it had been, like the tussle between the drowning man and the lifeguard! And of course she had invited it, just as she was inviting it now, but what she was really asking all along was not that the male should assault her, but that he should believe her a woman. This freedom of speech of hers was a kind of masquerade of sexuality, like the rubber breasts that homosexuals put on for drags, but, like the dummy breasts, its brazenness betrayed it: it was a poor copy and a hostile travesty all at once. But the men, she thought, did not look into it so deeply; they could only respond by leaping at her—which, after all, she supposed, was their readiest method of showing her that her impersonation had been convincing. Yet that response, when it came, never failed to disconcert and frighten her: I had not counted on this, she could always whisper to herself, with a certain sad bewilderment. For it was all wrong, it was unnatural: art is to be admired, not acted on, and the public does not belong on the stage, nor the actors in the audience.)

But once more the man across the table spared her. His face was a little heavy with drink, but she could see no lechery in it, and he listened to her as calmly as a priest. The sense of the nightmare lifted; free will was restored to her.

"You know what my favorite quotation is?" she asked suddenly. She must be getting drunk, she knew, or she would not have said this, and a certain cool part of her personality protested. I must not quote poetry, she thought, I must stop it; God help us, if I'm not careful, we'll be singing Yale songs next. But her voice had broken away from her; she could only follow it, satirically, from a great distance. "It's from Chaucer," she went on, when she saw that she had his attention. "Criseyde says it, 'I am myne owne woman, welle at aise.'"

The man had some difficulty in understanding the Middle English, but when at last he had got it straight, he looked at her with bald admiration.

"Golly," he said, "you are, at that!"

The train woke her the next morning as it jerked into Cheyenne. It was still dark. The Pullman shade was drawn, and she imagined at first that she was in her own lower berth. She knew that she had been drunk the night before, but reflected with satisfaction that Nothing Had Happened. It would have been terrible if . . . She moved slightly and touched the man's body.

She did not scream, but only jerked away in a single spasmodic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

movement of rejection. This can't be, she thought angrily, it can't be. She shut her eyes tight. When I open them again, she said, he will be gone. I can't face it, she thought, holding herself rigid; the best thing to do is to go back to sleep. For a few minutes she actually dozed and dreamed she was back in Lower Seven with the sheets feeling extraordinarily crisp and clean and the curtains hanging protectively about her. But in the dream her pillow shook under her as the porter poked it to call her for breakfast, and she woke again and knew that the man was still beside her and had moved in his sleep. The train was pulling out of the station. If it had not been so early, outside on the platform there would have been tall men in cowboy hats. Maybe, she thought, I passed out and he put me to bed. But the body next to her was naked, and horror rippled over her again as she realized by the coarseness of the sheets touching her that she was naked too. Oh my God, she said, get me out of this and I will do anything you want.

Waves of shame began to run through her, like savage internal blushes, as fragments of the night before presented themselves for inspection. They had sung songs, all right, she remembered, and there had been some question of disturbing the other passengers, and so the door had been shut. After that the man had come around to her side of the table and kissed her rather greedily. She had fought him off for a long time, but at length her will had softened. She had felt tired and kind, and thought, why not? Then there had been something peculiar about the lovemaking itself—but she could not recall what it was. She had tried to keep aloof from it, to be present in body but not in spirit. Somehow that had not worked out and she had been dragged in and humiliated. There was some comfort in this vagueness, but recollection quickly stabbed her again. There were (oh, holy Virgin!) four-letter words that she had been forced to repeat, and, at the climax, a rain of blows on her buttocks that must surely (dear God!) have left bruises. She must be careful not to let her aunt see her without any clothes on, she told herself, and remembered how once she had visualized sins as black marks on the white soul. This sin, at least, no one would see. But all at once she became aware of the significance of the sheets. The bed had been made up. And that meant that the Pullman porter. . . . She closed her eyes, exhausted, unable to finish the thought. The Negley Farson man, the New Deal lady, the waiter, the porter seemed to press in on her, a crowd of jeering material witnesses. If only nobody could know. . . .

But perhaps it was not too late. She had a sudden vision of herself in a black dress, her face scrubbed and powdered, her hair neatly combed, sitting standoffishly in her seat, watching Wyoming and Nevada go by and reading her publisher's copy of a new *avant-garde* novel. It *could* be done. If she could get back before the first call for breakfast, she might be able to carry it off. There would be the porter, of course, but he would not dare gossip to passengers. Softly, she climbed out of the berth and began to look for her clothes. In the darkness, she discovered her slip and dress

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neatly hung by the wash basin—the man must have put them there, and it was fortunate, at least, that he was such a shipshape character, for the dress would not be rumpled. On the floor she collected her stockings and a pair of white crepe-de-chine pants, many times mended, with a button off and a little brass pin in its place. Feeling herself blush for the pin, she sat down on the floor and pulled her stockings on. One garter was missing. She put on the rest of her clothes, and then began to look for the garter, but though she groped her way over every inch of the compartment, she could not find it. She sank to the floor again with one stocking hanging loosely down, buried her head in her arms and cried. She saw herself locked in an intolerable but ludicrous dilemma: it was impossible to face the rest of the train with one stocking hanging down; but it was also impossible to wait for the man to wake up and enlist him in retrieving the garter; it was impossible to send the porter for it later in the morning, and more impossible to call for it in person. But as the comic nature of the problem grew plain to her, her head cleared. With a final sob she stripped off her stockings and stuffed them into her purse. She stepped barefooted into her shoes, and was fumbling in her purse for a comb when the man turned over and groaned.

He remembers, she thought in terror, as she saw his arm reach out dimly white and plump in the darkness. She stood very still, waiting. Perhaps he would go back to sleep. But there was a click, and the reading light above the berth went on. The man looked at her in bewilderment. She realized that she had forgotten to buckle her belt.

"Dearest," he said, "what in the world are you doing?"

"I'm dressed," she said. "I've got to get out before they wake up. Good-bye."

She bent over with the intention of kissing him on the forehead. Politeness required something, but this was the most she could bring herself to do. The man seized her arms and pulled her down, sitting up himself beside her. He looked very fat and the short hair on his chest was gray.

"You can't go," he said, quite simply and naturally, but as if he had been thinking about it all night long. "I love you. I'm crazy about you. This is the most wonderful thing that's ever happened to me. You come to San Francisco with me and we'll go to Monterey, and I'll fix it up with Leonie to get a divorce."

She stared at him incredulously, but there was no doubt of it: he was serious. His body was trembling. Her heart sank as she saw that there was no longer any question of her leaving; common decency forbade it. Yet she was more frightened than flattered by his declaration of love. It was as if some terrible natural force were loose in the compartment. His seriousness, moreover, was a rebuke; her own squeamishness and sick distaste, which a moment before had seemed virtuous in her, now appeared heartless, even frivolous, in the face of his emotion.

"But I'm engaged," she said, rather thinly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You're not in love with him," he said. "You couldn't have done what you did last night if you were." As the memory of lovemaking returned to him, his voice grew embarrassingly hoarse.

"I was tight," she said flatly in a low voice.

"A girl like you doesn't let a man have her just because she's drunk."

She bowed her head. There was no possible answer she could give. "I must go," she repeated. In a way she knew that she would have to stay, and knew, too, that it was only a matter of hours, but, just as a convict whose sentence is nearly up will try a jail break and get shot down by the guards, so the girl, with Sacramento not far ahead, could not restrain herself from begging, like a claustrophobic, for immediate release. She saw that the man was getting hurt and angry, but still she held herself stiffly in his embrace and would not look at him. He turned her head round with his hand. "Kiss me," he said, but she pulled away.

"I have to throw up."

He pointed to the toilet seat, which was covered with green upholstery. (She had forgotten that Pullman compartments had this indecent feature.) She raised the cover and vomited, while the man sat on the bed and watched her. This was the nadir, she thought bitterly; surely nothing worse than this could ever happen to her. She wiped the tears from her eyes and leaned against the wall. The man made a gesture toward her.

"Don't touch me," she said, "or I'll be sick again. It would be better if I went back to my berth."

"Poor little girl," he said tenderly. "You feel bad, don't you?"

He got out of the berth and took a fresh bottle of whiskey from a suitcase.

"I'll have to save the Bourbon for the conductor," he said in a matter-of-fact, friendly voice. "He'll be around later on, looking for his cut."

For the first time that morning the girl laughed. The man poured out two small drinks and handed her one of them. "Take it like medicine," he advised.

She sat down on the berth and crossed her legs. The man put on a dressing-gown and pulled up a chair opposite her. They raised their glasses. The smell of the whiskey gagged her and she knew that it was out of the question, physically, for her to get drunk a second time. Yet she felt her spirits lift a little. There was an air of professional rowdyism about their drinking neat whiskey early in the morning in a dishevelled compartment that took her fancy.

"What about the porter?"

"Oh," said the man genially. "I've squared him. I gave him ten last night and I'll give him another ten when I get off. He thinks you're wonderful. He said to me, 'Mr. Breen, you sure done better than most.'"

"Oh!" said the girl, covering her face with her hands. "Oh! Oh!" For a moment she felt that she could not bear it, but as she heard the man laugh she made her own discomfiture comic and gave an extra groan or two that were purely theatrical. She raised her head and looked at him

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shamefaced, and then giggled. This vulgarity was more comforting to her than any assurances of love. If the seduction (or whatever it was) could be reduced to its lowest common denominator, could be seen in farcical terms, she could accept and even, wryly, enjoy it. The world of farce was a sort of moral underworld, a cheerful, well-lit hell where a Fall was only a prat-fall after all.

Moreover, this talk had about it the atmosphere of the locker room or the stag-line, an atmosphere more bracing, more astringent than the air of Bohemia. The ten-dollar tips, the Bourbon for the conductor indicated competence and connoisseurship, which, while not of the highest order, did extend from food and drink and haberdashery all the way up to women. That was what had been missing in the men she had known in New York—the shrewd buyer's eye, the swift, brutal appraisal. That was what you found in the country clubs and beach clubs and yacht clubs—but you never found it in the café of the Brevoort. The men she had known during these last four years had been, when you faced it, too easily pleased: her success had been gratifying but hollow. It was not difficult, after all, to be the prettiest girl at a party for the sharecroppers. At bottom, she was contemptuous of the men who had believed her perfect, for she knew that in a bathing suit at Southampton she would never have passed muster, and though she had never submitted herself to this cruel test, it lived in her mind as a threat to her. A copy of *Vogue* picked up at the beauty parlor, a lunch at a restaurant that was beyond her means, would suffice to remind her of her peril. And if she had felt safe with the different men who had been in love with her it was because—she saw it now—in one way or another they were all of them lame ducks. The handsome ones, like her fiancé, were good-for-nothing, the reliable ones, like her husband, were peculiar-looking, the well-to-do ones were short and wore lifts in their shoes or fat with glasses, the clever ones were alcoholic or slightly homosexual, the serious ones were Jews or foreigners or else wore beards or black shirts or were desperately poor and had no table manners. Somehow each of them was handicapped for American life and therefore humble in love. And was she too disqualified, did she really belong to this fraternity of cripples, or was she not a sound and normal woman who had been spending her life in self-imposed exile, a princess among the trolls?

She did not know. She would have found out soon enough had she stayed on in Portland, but she had not risked it. She had gone away East to college and never come back until now. And very early in her college life she had got engaged to a painter, so that nothing that happened in the way of cutting in at the dances at Yale and Princeton really "counted." She had put herself out of the running and was patently not trying. Her engagement had been a form of insurance, but the trouble was that it not only insured her against failure but also against success. Should she have been more courageous? She could not tell, even now. Perhaps she *was* a princess because her father was a real gentleman who lunched at his club

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and traveled by drawing room or compartment; but on the other hand, there was her aunt. She could not find out for herself; it would take a prince to tell her. This man now—surely he came from that heavenly world, that divine position at the center of things where choice is unlimited. And he had chosen *her*.

But that was all wrong. She had only to look at him to see that she had cheated again, had tried to get into the game with a deck of phony cards. For this man also was out of the running. He was too old. Sound as he was in every other respect, time had made a lame duck of him. If she had met him ten years before, would he have chosen her then?

He took the glass from her hands and put his arms around her. "My God," he said, "if this had only happened ten years ago!"

She held herself stony in his embrace, and felt indeed like a rock being lapped by some importunate wave. There was a touch of dignity in the simile, she thought, but what takes place in the end?—Erosion. At that the image suddenly turned and presented another facet to her: dear Jesus, she told herself, frightened, I'm really as hard as nails. Then all at once she was hugging the man with an air of warmth that was not quite spurious and not quite sincere (for the distaste could not quite be smothered but only ignored); she pressed her ten fingers into his back and for the first time kissed him carefully on the mouth.

The glow of self-sacrifice illuminated her. This, she thought decidedly, is going to be the only real act of charity I have ever performed in my life; it will be the only time I have ever given anything when it honestly hurt me to do so. That her asceticism should have to be expressed in terms of sensuality deepened, in a curious way, its value, for the sacrifice was both paradoxical and positive; this was no simple abstention like a meatless Friday or a chaste Sunday: it was the mortification of the flesh achieved through the performance of the act of pleasure.

Quickly she helped him take off the black dress, and stretched herself out on the berth like a slab of white lamb on an altar. While she waited with some impatience for the man to exhaust himself, for the indignity to be over, she contemplated with a burning nostalgia the image of herself, fully dressed, with the novel, in her Pullman seat, and knew, with the firmest conviction, that for once she was really and truly good, not hard or heartless at all.

"You need a bath," said the man abruptly, raising himself on one elbow and looking sharply down at her as she lay relaxed on the rumpled sheet. The curtain was halfway up, and outside the Great Salt Lake surrounded them. They had been going over it for hours, that immense, gray-brown blighting Dead Sea, which looked, not like an actual lake, but like a mirage seen in the desert. She had watched it for a long time, while the man beside her murmured of his happiness and his plans for their future; they had slept a little and when they opened their eyes again, it was still there, an interminable reminder of sterility, polygamy, and waste.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Get up," he went on, "and I'll ring for the porter to fix it for you."

He spoke harshly: this was the drill sergeant, the voice of authority. She sprang to attention, her lips quivering. Her nakedness, her long, loose hair, which a moment before had seemed voluptuous to her, now all at once became bold and disorderly, like an unbuttoned tunic at an army inspection. This was the first wound he had dealt her, but how deep the sword went in, back to the teachers who could smoke cigarettes and gossip with you in the late afternoon and then rebuke you in the morning class, back to the relations who would talk with you as an equal and then tell your aunt you were too young for silk stockings, back through all the betrayers, the friendly enemies, the Janus-faced overseers, back to the mother who could love you and then die.

"I don't want a bath," she asserted stubbornly. "I'm perfectly clean." But she knew, of course, that she had not bathed since she left New York, and, if she had been allowed to go her own way, would not have bathed until she reached Portland—who would think of paying a dollar for a bath on the train? In the ladies' room, where soot and spilt powder made a film over the dressing-tables and the hair-receivers stared up, archaic as cuspidors, one sponged oneself hastily under one's wrapper, and, looking at one's neighbors jockeying for position at the mirror, with their dirty kimonas, their elaborate make-up kits, and their uncombed permanents, one felt that one had been fastidious enough, and hurried away, out of the sweet, musty, unused smell of middle-aged women dressing. "I'm perfectly clean," she repeated. The man merely pressed the bell, and when the porter announced that the bath was ready, shoved her out into the corridor in his Brooks Brothers dressing-gown with a cake of English toilet soap in her hands.

In the ladies' lounge, the colored maid had drawn the bath and stood just behind the half-drawn curtain, waiting to hand her soap and towels. And though, ordinarily, the girl had no particular physical modesty, at this moment it seemed to her insupportable that anyone should watch her bathe. There was something terrible and familiar about the scene—herself in the tub, washing, and a woman standing tall above her—something terrible and familiar indeed about the whole episode of being forced to cleanse herself. Slowly she remembered. The maid was, of course, her aunt, standing over her tub on Saturday nights to see that she washed every bit of herself, standing over her at the medicine cabinet to see that she took the castor oil, standing over her bed in the mornings to see if the sheets were wet. Not since she had been grown-up, had she felt this peculiar weakness and shame. It seemed to her that she did not have the courage to send the maid away, that the maid was somehow the man's representative, his spy, whom it would be impious to resist. Tears of futile, self-pitying rage came into her eyes, and she told herself that she would stay in the bath all day, rather than go back to the compartment. But the bell rang in the dressing-room, and the maid rustled the curtain,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

saying, "Do you want anything more? I'll leave the towels here," and the door swung behind her, leaving the girl alone.

She lay in the bath a long time, gathering her forces. In the tepid water, she felt for the first time a genuine socialist ardor. For the first time in her life, she truly hated luxury, hated Brooks Brothers and Bergdorf Goodman and Chanel and furs and good food. All the pretty things she had seen in shops and coveted appeared to her suddenly gross, superfatted, fleshly, even, strangely, unclean. By a queer reversal, the very safety pin in her underwear, which she had blushed for earlier in the morning came to look to her now as a kind of symbol of moral fastidiousness, just as the sores of a mendicant saint can, if thought of in the right way, testify to his spiritual health. A proud, bitter smile formed on her lips, as she saw herself as a citadel of socialist virginity, that could be taken and taken again, but never truly subdued. The man's whole assault on her now seemed to have had a political character; it was an incidental atrocity in the long class war. She smiled again, thinking that she had come out of it untouched, while he had been reduced to a jelly.

All morning in the compartment he had been in a state of wild and happy excitement, full of projects for reform and renewal. He was not sure what ought to happen next; he only knew that everything must be different. In one breath, he would have the two of them playing golf together at Del Monte; in the next, he would imagine that he had given her up and was starting in again with Leonie on a new basis. Then he would see himself throwing everything overboard and going to live in sin in a villa in a little French town. But at that moment a wonderful technical innovation for the manufacture of steel would occur to him, and he would be anxious to get back to the office to put it through. He talked of giving his fortune to a pacifist organization in Washington, and five minutes later made up his mind to send little Frank, who showed signs of being a problem child, to a damn good military school. Perhaps he would enlarge his Gates Mills house; perhaps he would sell it and move to New York. He would take her to the theatre and the best restaurants; they would go to museums and ride on bus-tops. He would become a CIO organizer, or else he would give her a job in the personnel department of the steel company, and she could live in Cleveland with him and Leonie. But no, he would not do that, he would marry her, as he had said in the first place, or, if she would not marry him, he would keep her in an apartment in New York. Whatever happened she must not get off the train. He had come to regard her as a sort of rabbit's foot that he must keep by him at any price.

Naturally, she told herself, the idea was absurd. Yet suddenly her heart seemed to contract and the mood of indulgent pity ebbed away from her. She shivered and pulled herself out of the tub. His obstinacy on this point frightened her. If he should bar her way when the time came . . . ? If there should be a struggle . . . ? If she should have to pull the communication cord . . . ? She told herself that such things do not happen,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that during the course of the day she would surely be able to convince him that she must go. (She had noticed that the invocation of her father inevitably moved him. "We mustn't do anything to upset your father," he would say. "He must be a very fine man." And tears would actually come to his eyes. She would play that, she thought, for all it was worth.) Yet her uneasiness did not abate. It was as if, carelessly, inadvertently, almost, she had pulled a switch that had set a whole strange factory going, and now, too late, she discovered that she did not know how to turn it off. She could have run away, but some sense of guilt, of social responsibility, of primitive awe, kept her glued to the spot, watching and listening, waiting to be ground to bits. Once, in a beauty parlor, she had been put under a defective dryer that remained on high no matter where she turned the regulator; her neck seemed to be burning up, and she could, at any time, have freed herself by simply getting out of the chair; yet she had stayed there the full half hour, until the operator came to release her. "I think," she had said then, lightly, "there is something wrong with the machine." And when the operator had examined it, all the women had gathered round, clucking, "How did you ever stand it?" She had merely shrugged her shoulders. It had seemed, at the time, better to suffer than to "make a fuss." Perhaps it was something like this that had held her to the man today, the fear of a scene and a kind of morbid competitiveness that would not allow the man to outdistance her in feeling. Yet suddenly she knew that it did not matter what her motives were: she could not, *could not*, get off the train until the man was reconciled to her doing so, until this absurd, ugly love story should somehow be concluded.

If only she could convert him to something, if she could say, "Give up your business, go to Paris, become a Catholic, join the CIO, join the army, join the Socialist Party, go off to the war in Spain." For a moment the notion engaged her. It would be wonderful, she thought, to be able to relate afterwards that she had sent a middle-aged business man to die for the Republicans at the Alcazar. But almost at once she recognized that this was too much to hope for. The man back in the compartment was not equal to it; he was equal to a divorce, to a change of residence, at most to a change of business, but not to a change of heart. She sighed slightly, facing the truth about him. His gray flannel dressing-gown lay on a chair beside her. Very slowly, she wrapped herself in it; the touch of the material made gooseflesh rise. Something about this garment—the color, perhaps, or the unsuitable size—reminded her of the bathing suits one rents at a public swimming pool. She gritted her teeth and pulled open the door. She did not pause to look about but plunged down the corridor with lowered head; though she passed no one, it seemed to her that she was running the gauntlet. The compartment, with its naked man and disordered bed, beckoned her on now, like a home.

When she opened the door, she found the man dressed, the compartment made up, and a white cloth spread on the collapsible table between the seats. In a few minutes the waiter of the night before was back with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

orange juice in cracked ice and corned beef hash and fish cakes. It was as if the scenery, which had been struck the night before, had been set up again for the matinee. The difference was that the door remained shut. Nevertheless, though there were no onlookers, atmospheric conditions in the compartment had changed; the relationship of the pair took on a certain sociable formality. The little breakfast passed off like a ceremonial feast. All primitive peoples, she thought, had known that a cataclysmic experience, whether joyful or sad, had in the end to be liquidated in an orderly meal. The banquets in Homer came to her mind, the refreshments the Irish put out at a wake, the sweetmeats the Arabs nibble after love, the fairy stories that end And-the-king-ordered-a-great-dinner-to-be-served-to-all-his-people. Upheavals of private feeling, like the one she had just been through, were as incalculable and anti-social as death. With a graceful inclination of her head, she accepted a second fish cake from the waiter, and felt herself restored to the human race.

There was to be no more lovemaking, she saw, and from the moment she felt sure of this, she began to be a little bit in love. The long day passed as if in slow motion, in desultory, lingering, tender talk. Dreamy confidences were murmured, and trailed off, casual and unemphatic, like the dialogue in a play by Chekhov. The great desert lake out the window disappeared and was replaced by the sage brush country, which seemed to her a pleasant, melancholy symbol of the contemporary waste land. The man's life lay before her; it was almost as if she could reach out and touch it, poke it, explore it, shine it up, and give it back to him. The people in it grew distinct to her, though they swam in a poetic ambience. She could see his first wife, an executive in her forties, good-looking, well-turned-out, the kind of woman that eats at Longchamps or the Algonquin; and then Leonie, finer-drawn, younger, with a certain Marie Laurencin look that pale, pretty, neutral-colored rich women get; then herself, still younger, still more highly organized—and all the time the man, a ludicrous and touching Ponce de Leon, growing helplessly older and coarser in inverse relation to the women he needed and wanted.

And she could see the Brussels carpet in a Philadelphia whorehouse, where he had first had a woman, the judge's face at the divorce hearing, the squash court at the club, the aquamarine bathtubs in his house, the barbecue pit, the fraternity brothers, the Audubon prints in his study, the vacuum bottle on the night table. Somehow it had become essential to them both that she should know *everything*. They might have been collaborators, drawing up a dossier for a new "Babbitt." This is what I am, he was saying: the wall paper in the larger guest room is a blue and white Colonial design; I go to bed at ten and Leonie sits up and reads; I like kippers for breakfast; we have Heppelwhite chairs in the sitting room; the doctor is worried about my kidneys, and I feel lonely when I first wake up.

There were the details, the realistic "touches," and then there was the great skeleton of the story itself. In 1917 he was a chemistry major, just

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out of the State university, with a job for the next year teaching at a high school, and plans, after that, for a master's degree, and perhaps a job in the department at Cornell, where he had an uncle in the Agricultural School. The father had been a small business man in a Pennsylvania coal town, the grandfather a farmer, the mother a little lady from Tennessee. But then there came the Officers' Training Camp, and the brilliant war record, and the right connections, so that the high-school job was never taken, and instead he was playing handball at the Athletic Club in the evenings, and working as a metallurgist for the steel company during the day. Soon he was moved into production, but somehow he was too amiable and easy-going for this, and after his first marriage, he went into the coal business. When he came back to the steel company, it was as a purchasing agent, and here his shrewdness and bonhomie were better employed. He became Chief Purchasing Agent and Fourth Vice-President; it was doubtful whether he would ever go further.

For ten years, he confided, he had been visited now and then by a queer sense of having missed the boat, but it was all vague with him: he had no idea of when the boat had sailed or what kind of boat it was or where it went to. Would he have done better to take the teaching job? It hardly seemed so. Plainly, he was no scientist—the steel company had seen this at once—and, had he taken that other road, at best he would have finished as the principal of a high school or the head of the chemistry department in a small-time state university. No, she thought, he was not a scientist manqué, but simply a nice man, and it was a pity that society had offered him no nicer way of being nice than the job of buying materials for a company in Little Steel. The job, she saw, was one of the least compromising jobs he could have held and still made money; by regarding his business life as a nexus of personal friendships he had tried to hold himself aloof from the banks and the blast furnaces. He was full of fraternal feelings, loyalties, even, toward the tin salesmen and iron magnates and copper executives and their wives who wined him and dined him and took him to the latest musical shows over and over again. ("Don't mistake me," he said, "most of those fellows and their women are mighty fine people"). Still—there was always the contract, waiting to be signed the next morning, lying implacably on the desk.

Here he was, affable, a good mixer, self-evidently a sound guy, and yet these qualities were somehow impeached by the commercial use that was made of them, so that he found himself, as he grew older, hunting, more and more anxiously, for new and non-commercial contexts in which to assert his gregariousness. He refused the conventional social life of Cleveland. At the country club dances, he was generally to be found in the bar, shooting dice with the bartender; he played a little stud poker, but no bridge. In New York, he would stay at the Biltmore or the Murray Hill, buy his clothes at Brooks Brothers, and eat—when Leonie was not with him—at Cavanagh's, Luchow's or the Lafayette. But the greater part of his time he spent on trains, talking to his fellow-passengers, getting

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their life stories. ("Golly," he interjected, "if I were a writer like you!") This was one of his greatest pleasures, he said, and he would never go by plane if he could help it. In the three and a half days that it took a train to cross the continent, you could meet somebody who was a little bit different, and have a good, long visit with them. Sometimes, also, he would stop over and look up old friends, but lately that had been disappointing —so many of them were old or on the wagon, suffering from ulcers or cirrhosis of the liver. . . .

He spread his hands suddenly. There it was, he indicated; he was sharing it all with her, like a basket lunch. And, as she accepted it, nodding from time to time in pleasure and recognition, supplementing it occasionally from her own store, she knew that the actual sharing of his life was no longer so much in question. During this afternoon of confidences, he had undergone a catharsis. He was at rest now, and happy, and she was free. He would never be alone again, she thought; in fact, it was as if he had never been alone at all, for by a tremendous act of perception, she had thrust herself back into his past, and was settled there forever, like the dear companion, the twin, we pray for as children, while our parents, listening, laugh. She had brought it off, and now she was almost reluctant to leave him. A pang of joy went through her as she examined her own sorrow and found it to be real. All day she believed she had been acting a tragic part in something called One Perfect Night, but slowly, without her being aware of it, the counterfeit had passed into the true. She did not understand exactly how it had happened. Perhaps it was because she had come so very, very close—*tout comprendre, c'est tout aimer*—and perhaps it was because she was good at the task he had assigned her: at the sight of his life, waiting to be understood, she had rolled up her sleeves with all the vigor of a first-class cook confronting a brand-new kitchen.

"I love you," she said suddenly. "I didn't before, but now I do."

The man glanced sharply at her.

"Then you won't get off the train . . . ?"

"Oh, yes," she said, for now at last she could be truthful with him. "I'll certainly get off. One reason I love you, I suppose, is because I *am* getting off."

His dark eyes met hers in perfect comprehension.

"And one reason I'm going to let you do it," he said, "is because you love me."

She lowered her eyes, astonished, once more, at his shrewdness.

"Hell," he said, "it's a funny thing, but I'm so happy now that I don't care whether I ever see you again. I probably won't feel that way after you're gone. Right now I think I can live on this one day for the rest of my life."

"I hope you can," she said, her voice trembling with sincerity. "My dear, dear Mr. Breen, I hope you can." Then they both began to laugh wildly because she could not call him by his first name.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Still, he had not quite relinquished the idea of marrying her, and, once, very late in the afternoon, he struck out at her with unexpected, clumsy ferocity.

"You need a man to take care of you," he exclaimed. "I hate to see you go back to that life you've been living in New York. Your father ought to make you stay home in Portland. In a few years, you'll be one of those Bohemian horrors with oily hair and long earrings. It makes me sick to think about it."

She pressed her lips together, and was amazed to find how hurt she was. It was unthinkable that he should speak of her way of life with such contempt; it was as if he had made a point of telling her that her gayest, wickedest, most extravagant hat was ugly and out-of-fashion.

"But you fell in love with me because I *am* Bohemian," she said, forcing herself to smile, to take a suave and reasonable tone.

"No," he said, in a truculently sentimental voice. "It's because underneath all that you're just a sweet girl."

She shook her head impatiently. It was not true, of course, but it was hopeless to argue with him about it. Clearly, he took some cruel satisfaction in telling her that she was different from what she was. That implied that he had not fallen in love with her at all, but with some other person: the whole extraordinary little idyll had been based on a misunderstanding. Poor Marianna, she thought, poor pickings, to be loved under cover of darkness in Isabella's name! She did not speak for a long time.

Night fell again, and the little dinner that was presently served lacked the glamour of the earlier meals. The Union Pacific's menu had been winnowed out; they were reduced to steak and Great Big Baked Potatoes. She wished that they were out in the diner, in full view, eating some unusual dish and drinking a bottle of white wine. Even here in the compartment, she had hoped that he would offer her wine; the waiter suggested it, but the man shook his head without consulting her; his excesses in drink and love were beginning to tell on him; he looked tired and sick.

But by ten o'clock, when they were well out of Reno, she had warmed to him again. He had been begging her to let him send her a present; the notion displeased her at first; she felt a certain arrogant condescension in it; she refused to permit it, refused, even, to give him her address. Then he looked at her suddenly, with all the old humility and square self-knowledge in his brown eyes.

""Look," he said, "you'll be doing me a kindness. You see, that's the only thing a man like me can do for a woman is buy her things and love her a hell of a lot at night. I'm different from your literary boy friends and your artistic boy friends. I can't write you a poem or paint your picture. The only way I can show that I love you is to spend money on you."

"Money's your medium," she said, smiling, happy in this further insight he had given her, happy in her own gift of concise expression.

He nodded and she gave her consent. It must, however, be a very

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

small present, and it must not, on any account, be jewelry, she said, not knowing precisely why she imposed this latter condition.

As they moved into the last hour of the trip, the occasion took on an elegiac solemnity. They talked very little; the man held both of her hands tightly. Toward the end, he broke the silence to say, "I want you to know that this has been the happiest day of my life." As she heard these words, a drowsy, sensuous contentment invaded her; it was as if she had been waiting for them all along; this was the climax, the spiritual orgasm. And it was just as she had known from the very first: in the end, he had not let her down. She had not been wrong in him after all.

They stood on the platform as the train came into Sacramento. Her luggage was piled up around them; one suitcase had a missing handle and was tied up with a rope. The man made a noise of disapproval.

"Your father," he said, "is going to feel terrible when he sees *that.*"

The girl laughed; the train slowed down; the man kissed her passionately several times, ignoring the porter who waited beside them with a large, Hollywood-darky smile on his face.

"If I were ten years younger," the man said, in a curious, measured tone, as if he were taking an oath, "I'd never let you get off this train." It sounded, she thought, like an apology to God.

In the station the air was hot and thick. She sat down to wait, and immediately she was damp and grubby; her stockings were wrinkled; her black suede shoes had somehow got dusty, and, she noticed for the first time, one of the heels was run over. Her trip home seemed peculiarly pointless, for she had known for the last eight hours that she was never going to marry the young man back in New York.

On the return trip, her train stopped in Cleveland early in the morning. In a new fall suit she sat in the club car, waiting. Mr. Breen hurried into the car. He was wearing a dark-blue business suit and had two packages in his hand. One of them was plainly a florist's box. She took it from him and opened it, disclosing two of the largest and most garish purple orchids she had ever seen. He helped her pin them on her shoulder and did not appear to notice how oddly they harmonized with her burnt siena jacket. The other box contained a bottle of whiskey; *in memoriam,* he said.

They had the club car to themselves, and for the fifteen minutes the train waited in the station he looked at her and talked. It seemed to her that he had been talking ever since she left him, talking volubly, desperately, incoherently, over the long-distance telephone, via air mail, by Western Union and Postal Telegraph. She had received from him several pieces of glamour-girl underwear and a topaze brooch, and had been disappointed and a little humiliated by the taste displayed. She was glad now that the train stopped at such an outlandish hour, for she felt that he cut a ridiculous figure, with his gifts in his hand, like a superannuated stage-door johnny.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She herself had little to say, and sat passive, letting the torrent of talk and endearment splash over her. Sooner or later, she knew, the law of diminishing returns would begin to operate, and she would cease to reap these overwhelming profits from the small investment of herself she had made. At the moment, he was begging her to marry him, describing a business conference he was about to attend, and asking her approval of a vacation trip he was planning to take with his wife. Of these three elements in his conversation, the first was predominant, but she sensed that already she was changing for him, becoming less of a mistress and more of a confidante. It was significant that he was not (as she had feared) hoping to ride all the way to New York with her: the business conference, he explained, prevented that.

It never failed, she thought, to be a tiny blow to guess that a man is losing interest in you, and she was tempted, as on such occasions she always had been, to make some gesture that would quicken it again. If she let him think she would sleep with him, he would stay on the train, and let the conference go by the board. He had weighed the conference, obviously, against a platonic interlude, and made the sensisble decision. But she stifled her vanity, and said to herself that she was glad that he was showing some signs of self-respect; in the queer, business-English letters he had written her, and on the phone for an hour at a time at her father's house, he had been too shockingly abject.

She let him get off the train, still talking happily, pressed his hand warmly but did not kiss him.

It was three weeks before he came to see her in her New York apartment, and then, she could tell, he was convalescent. He had become more critical of her and more self-assured. Her one-and-a-half rooms in Greenwich Village gave him claustrophobia, he declared, and when she pointed out to him that the apartment was charming, he stated flatly that it was not the kind of place he liked, nor the kind of place she ought to be living in. He was more the business man and less the suitor, and though he continued to ask her to marry him, she felt that the request was somewhat formal; it was only when he tried to make love to her that his real, hopeless, humble ardor showed itself once more. She fought him off, though she had an inclination to yield, if only to reestablish her ascendancy over him. They went to the theater two nights, and danced, and drank champagne, and the third morning he phoned her from his hotel that he had a stomach attack and would have to go home to Cleveland with a doctor.

More than a month went by before she saw him again. This time he refused to come to her apartment, but insisted that she meet him at his suite in the Ambassador. They passed a moderate evening: the man contented himself with dining at Longchamps. He bought her a large Brie cheese at the Voisin down the street, and told her an anti-New-Deal joke. Just below the surface of his genial manner, there was an hostility that hurt her. She found that she was extending herself to please him. All

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her gestures grew over-feminine and demonstrative; the lift of her eyebrows was a shade too arch: like a passée belle, she was overplaying herself. I must let go, she told herself; the train is pulling out; if I hang on, I'll be dragged along at its wheels. She made him take her home early.

A little later she received a duck he had shot in Virginia. She did not know how to cook it and it stayed in her icebox so long that the neighbors complained of the smell.

When she got a letter from him that had been dictated to his stenographer, she knew that his splurge was over. After that, she saw him once —for cocktails. He ordered double martinis and got a little drunk. Then his friendliness revived briefly, and he begged her with tears in his eyes to "forget all this red nonsense and remember that you're just your father's little girl at heart." Walking home alone, trying to decide whether to eat in a tea room or cook herself a chop, she felt flat and sad, but in the end she was glad that she had never told him of her broken engagement.

When her father died, the man must have read the account in the papers, for she got a telegram that read: SINCEREST CONDOLENCES YOU HAVE LOST THE BEST FRIEND YOU WILL EVER HAVE. She did not file it away with the other messages, but tore it up carefully and threw it in the wastebasket. It would have been dreadful if anyone had seen it.

CONTRIBUTORS

RENE ETIEMBLE, author of a biography of Rimbaud and contributor to *La Nouvelle Revue Française* and other literary magazines, has been in this country for several years. He has been teaching at the University of Chicago. . . . W. H. AUDEN, the British poet, is now living in Brooklyn, N. Y. . . . MARY MCCARTHY, formerly an editor of PARTISAN REVIEW, is bringing out a book of fiction next winter. "The Man in the Brooks Brothers Shirt" is a section from it. . . . PAUL MATTICK is an editor of *Living Marxism*. He lives in Chicago. . . . WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS, whose poetry is familiar to our readers, lives in Rutherford, N. J., where he has practiced medicine for many years. . . . MARIANNE MOORE is bringing out a new book of poems this fall. . . . GEORGE ORWELL is a British critic and novelist who fought in the Republican Army in Spain and whose book of essays, *Inside the Whale*, was recently published by New Directions.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Results of the P. R. Questionnaire

EDITORS' NOTE: *After the March-April issue this year, we sent a questionnaire to our 800-odd individual subscribers, asking for certain information about themselves and their impressions of the magazine. About one-third of the blanks, 250 in all, were filled out and returned, not a bad response considering that the questions were such as to require considerable time and effort for a serious answer. The replies, needless to say, are of the greatest value and interest to the editors.*

How accurate a picture of PR's readers does this sampling give? 250 is about a tenth of the total circulation of the issue preceding the questionnaire and is an even smaller proportion of the last (May-June) issue, sales of which are approaching 3500 copies. Furthermore, the results are distorted by the fact that, while 35% of the magazine's total circulation is in New York City, only 28% of the replies came from there—a discrepancy which probably has cultural as well as geographical meaning. It should be borne in mind, therefore, that such generalizations as are made below about PR's readers, refer to the 250 answerers of the questionnaire.

The following summary of the results was compiled by Dwight Macdonald.

1. *Who reads PR?*

(a) AGE: PR readers are quite young. Over half of them—53%—are in their twenties, and another 27% are in their thirties, leaving 3% below 20 and 17% over 40. The average age is 32, which is slightly under the average age of the editors. The youngest is 16, the oldest 80.*

(b) OCCUPATION: The five most frequent occupations are: teacher (19%), student (12%), writer (10%), office worker (5%), doctor (5%).† 8% are either unemployed or retired. Other common occupations are: business executive, journalist, engineer. Among our readers there is one broker, one freight agent, one life insurance president, one blueprint maker, and one surveyor. There is also one Kansas dirt farmer, who first heard of the magazine from the Trotskyist press. Only 4% of

*The English literary monthly, *Horizon*, also sent out a questionnaire recently—from which, in fact, ours was largely copied. Its readers turned out to be even younger: only 15% over 40. The amazingly high figure of 15% under 20 was also reported.

†Cf. *Horizon*, which has 25% teachers and 12% students. The third largest group (8%) consists of clergymen, a fact all the more curious considering that PR's answerers included just *one* cleric—a priest. These are the normal peacetime occupations of *Horizon's* subscribers, by the way. The figures are much smaller today, as the result of the war, which has sent 17% of *Horizon's* readers into either the armed forces or full-time Civil Defence work. This tendency is just beginning to make itself felt here, but may be expected to play a big part in the future of a magazine with well over half its readers of draft age. Already we are getting letters from readers, and contributors, who have been drafted into the army. (See those printed in this issue.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

our readers are engaged in workingclass occupations, but these range widely—ore sampler, hosiery mill worker, shipyard worker, telephone repairman.*

(c) LOCATION: PR readers are scattered through 42 states and 17 foreign countries. A breakdown of the regional distribution (taken from our circulation records, not from the questionnaire returns) shows that PR is primarily an urban enterprise, in readership as well as editing; the two largest cities, with 9% of the nation's population, have 44% of PR's readers.

Section	*% of PR Readers*
New York City	35
West of Mississippi	16
Middle Atlantic States (exc. New York City)	13
Chicago	9
Midwestern States (exc. Chicago)	9
New England	8
Foreign	7
Southern States	3

2. *How did readers first hear of PR?*

Much the largest number first heard of the magazine through a friend (30%). Next most frequent sources were: ads in the *New Republic* (12%), newsstands or bookstores (7%), story in book section of *Time* magazine last year (5%), libraries (5%), ads in the *Nation* (4%). The old saw that any publicity is good publicity was modestly verified by the fact that a few readers first learned of PR through Malcolm Cowley's attacks on it several years ago and through the contemporaneous snipings in the Stalinist press. (It might also be noted that the *Time* article was by no means friendly, or even fair.) The oddest reply to this question was: "I mistook it for a brochure on proportional representation." The most dramatic: "From a young American doctor, in November 1936, at Sierra de Alcubierre on the Aragon Front, where I was fighting with the POUM troops."

3. *What do PR readers want more of? What less of?*

Almost everybody—9 out of 10 answering this question—wants more articles and book reviews. Slightly more readers want less poetry than want more poetry, and slightly more readers want more stories than want less stories. Here it must be noted that by far the least liked aspect of PR seems to be the poetry it prints. The big "less" vote on poetry was accompanied by such notations as "Why can't somebody write *one* good poem?"

*At the other end of the scale, for two years we had a Supreme Court Justice on our subscription list. His recent defection was roughly balanced by a new subscription from the reference library of a Wall Street investment house.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And: "The poetry is consistently bad, apparently selected by mingled timidity and ignorance."

As to subject-matter of articles, practically everybody—9 out of 10 again—wants more articles on writers and writing. Only slightly less popular are articles on philosophy. There was more disagreement on art and politics, though in both cases those who want more outnumbered those who want less by about 4 to 1.*

A variety of new subjects was suggested. Music with 21 write-in votes, was easily first, with Economics a poor second (11 votes), and Science and Sociology tied for third (9 each). Other suggestions, in order of popularity, were: Theatre and Dance, History, Psychology, the Labor Movement, Radio, Education, Propaganda, Religion, Linguistics, Architecture, and Semantics.

4. *What do readers think about PR's politics?*

Under the heading of general likes and dislikes, the sharpest disagreement appeared, as might be expected, in the political field. Of those who mentioned politics in their replies, 47 expressed criticism of one kind or another, while 59 approved of PR's politics. Typical of the latter is this reply to Question 5 ("What in general do you like about PARTISAN REVIEW?"): "1. Its rational Leftist analysis and criticism. 2. Its coolheadedness in a warmongering atmosphere."

The critics, who generally expressed themselves at considerably greater length than those approving (a tendency observable throughout the questionnaire and scarcely to be wondered at), fall into three groups: those who think the magazine is not revolutionary enough (6), those who think it is too anti-Stalinist (9), and the majority, who are unsympathetic in general to its Marxist political line (32). A typical comment in the first group, under "dislike," is: "its deviation from a correct political line and yielding to bourgeois war pressure." Or, as another reader put it in American: "your going sissy in the last few issues and soft-pedalling on politics."

A reader in Cambridge, Mass., well sums up the objections of the majority of critics: "The politics seem to me very naive and unreal: a real ivory-tower position from which any one coming forth with a concrete program for action can be attacked. Of course all concrete programs involve concessions and compromises; they are all impure and tarnished as

*_Horizon's_ poll contrasts sharply with these figures, except for the demand for more articles on writers and writing, which is as strong among _Horizon's_ readers as among ours. Whereas PR's articles are much more popular than its stories and poems, the opposite is the case with _Horizon_. And while 36% of _Horizon's_ readers want fewer political articles (by far the most unpopular category), only 20% of PR's readers ask for less politics, as against 55% who want less poetry and 45% who want fewer stories. These contrasting results may indicate that _Horizon_ prints better creative material than PR, but inferior political articles. Or that British intellectuals—whether because of wartime 'escapism' or general cultural background—are less interested in politics than their American similars. Or both.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to men and motives. But it is no discovery to point that out, and a closer study of the American democratic tradition would show the necessity of all this. . . . I totally disagree with your views on Roosevelt and the war." Another characteristic "dislike" item is: "its clinging to the rags and tatters of Marxism."

A number of readers who disagree with the political articles nevertheless seem to find them valuable. "I read the political articles mainly for the expression of a certain point of view, with which I happen to disagree heartily," writes one. And: "I do not share the political views of the editors; my own are nearer those of the *Catholic Worker* and Herbert Agar. But I find the most keen political commentary from the left in your pages. . . . And I much like the fashion in which, while keeping its editorial policy clear, you include the work of non-Marxists like Eliot, Tate, Zabel and Katherine Anne Porter."

5. *What do readers like and dislike about the magazine in general?*

As is perhaps natural, the replies here leaned heavily to the favorable side. Although only 11 readers left the "like" space blank, 36 failed to fill out the "dislike" space. It is, of course, impossible to classify statistically the great variety of reactions. Some typical replies may be set down here as a basis for generalization.

First, for the "like" statements:

"the fact that it tries to be intelligent"

"I like PR because it is so often unsatisfied."

"the feeling of intensity, no nonsense or amateurishness, about the magazine"

"its refusal to talk down to its readers—its writers take for granted that said readers might have brains too (unlike liberal mags here)"

"permits disagreements without smothering it during gestation"

"because it is the only publication in America that has any seriousness in its writing"

"its lack of prejudice—or perhaps more precisely, its particular brand of prejudice"

"Most of all, I like the way PR provides an opportunity for serious discussion of serious subjects, without becoming excessively academic."

"the length of the articles: they give a writer enough space to stretch his mind"

"I like PR because it is one of the few magazines that discusses things I am interested in, and because it occasionally publishes a piece of very good writing."

Now for the "dislike" side:

"editorial dogmatism . . . sometimes a trifle 'arty'"

"its attitude of beating a drum, and the lack of any attempt to present

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

both sides of any picture. Its outlook should be broader, more temperate, and more confident."

"Its all too Olympian, condescending attitude towards everything and everybody except a few big-shot European authors and idea-men. . . . Too much tooting of the editors' own horns. Too many pets get printed over and over again with any and all cackling they have to offer."

"You seem to have a penchant for what I call the hoodlums in words."

"a tendency to be esoteric"

"only one thing, its sectarianism"

"too much closed shop, though I like these people; not experimental enough"

"a certain priggishness in your editorials and pronunciamentos (for that's what they are) on Literature and the Times. *Literature is not a 'serious' thing.* There is nothing more important, of higher value; but in your sense it should never be serious. You need a few charlatans, who know what they are."

The most interesting thing about these evaluations is that the "dislikes" are mostly restatements in negative terms of the same qualities praised in the "likes," which seems to show at least that the magazine has a definite editorial character. On the score of general literary quality and intellectual level there is almost nothing but praise, only one reply of the entire 250 expressing any criticism here. The bulk of the criticisms fall into two categories: (1) PR is too "highbrow" (esoteric, snobbish, over-intellectual, pedantic, precious, ivory-towerish); (2) editorial policy is too partisan (sectarian, narrow, negativistic, destructive, hypercritical, humorless, unfair). On category (2), it is true, there is some disagreement on fact between the "likes" and the "dislikes," with a number of readers praising PR's "broad," "catholic," and "liberal" editorial policy. But even here a number like precisely its "partisan" quality, its refusal to compromise and conform. And in category (1) the positive-negative evaluation pattern holds good throughout. The magazine is "esoteric"—and it is "not a band wagon publication." It is "highbrow"—and it is "serious." It is "snobbish"—and it is "stimulating," "provocative." It is "over-intellectual"—and it "refuses to talk down to its readers."

Letters

"WHY NOT KEEP QUIET?"

Sirs:

The number of pages (two-thirds) which you gave to political theorizing in the last issue of PARTISAN REVIEW must be justified, it seems to me: because a new politico-intellectual discovery is being made which is eventually, no matter how remotely, to affect society — and hence also affect cultural endeavor; or because the situation is so acute that the political-moralistic issue takes precedence.

PARTISAN REVIEW has officially abandoned any political "line" which is at this point relatable to important organization activity — unless we except the domestic fascist movements. In other words, your "let's not help England" may be stuff for Lindbergh and his followers to feed on. It is an isolated recommendation, and a purely negative one, in relation to your own theory. You don't care

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whether England or Germany wins the war, so you say.

Then why don't you keep quiet?

Do you hope to make *everybody* negative? Do you hope even to influence movements which are building on a German victory?

. . . It was nice that you didn't make Greenberg (writing about Klee) negative in this recent issue. He has a point of view, significant even to people not agreeing with him.

Very truly yours,
BALCOMB GREENE

New York City

P.R. wants to make nobody negative, does not intend to keep quiet. See the 'propositions on the war' by Greenberg and Macdonald in this issue.—ED.

DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER

Editor's Note: Mr. Farrell asks us to print the note that follows, sent to the editor of The Nation.

Dear Miss Kirchwey:

I used to subscribe to *The Nation.* In the days when I was a subscriber, I read the articles and dispatches of your foreign correspondent, Louis Fischer. I am now reading Mr. Fischer's book, *Men and Politics,* and I learn, by his own confession, that he suppressed facts concerning Russia and the Moscow trials, and refrained from telling us what he really thought of Stalin's internal policy and regime. In the light of Mr. Fischer's own admission, I feel that I was defrauded by *The Nation.* I think that it is only fair and proper of you to return to me the money I spent in subscriptions to your magazine. I was paying for honest intellectual goods, and I now learn from Mr. Fischer, himself, that I was not getting these goods.

You can find the exact period of my subscription in your records. I shall be grateful for your check refunding me this amount.

Sincerely yours,
JAMES T. FARRELL

May 10, 1941
New York City

WHAT IS FUNCTIONALISM?

Sirs:

"Functionalism," according to Mr. Alan Mather, in his article on *Functionalism and Naive Materialism in American Architecture,* "consists of discovering the special characteristics of a group of people, and then of designing a building so fitted to these group peculiarities as to create a new and socially expressive form or architectural type. . . . Functionalism relates to social forms which grow out of *all* the natural needs of man. Naive materialism is concerned only with those attributes of men which are useful to capitalism."

Since we accept these categories, we must take exception when Mr. Mather states the case against naive materialism in entirely different terms, when he says that "above all, naive materialism flouts the immaterial facts of consciousness and denies place to emotionalism in architecture," that it strives to eliminate "sensitiveness to the effects of texture, color, mass, and line." For on the basis of Mr. Mather's original definition a stronger case for the aesthetic superiority of functionalism can be made apart from the concept of beauty as a superimposable element.

It should be made clear that the *theory* of functionalism does not neglect the "sensibilities." On the contrary it asserts that people find pleasure in the correspondence between form and purpose; that buildings designed to fit the needs of the users are beautiful *because* they are so designed. Furthermore, ornament may improve or detract; and choices of material, mass, and color must be made, and should be made with the sensitiveness which Mr. Mather praises. These, however, are secondary.

To use Mr. Mather's own example: Parkchester *is* hideous, but not because it neglects the immaterial facts of consciousness nor because it lacks emotionalism. Its unpleasantness is due to the fact that the buildings are so visibly not designed to meet the physical and social needs of the people who live in them. As Mr. Mather says, "under naive materialism the definition of functionalism is strained to include an agreement with the requirements of capitalism." Parkchester falls far short of adequate standards of density and orientation. Had these standards been applied, they would have gone a long way toward putting

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

order in the place of offending confusion. And some of the boredom produced by the existing buildings would have been avoided if more efficient means of letting in daylight had been used. On the other hand the result would have been only slightly less pleasing had McKim, Meade and White decoration been added; and it would have been only slightly improved by Mendelsohn line.

The fundamental criterion for functionalism, then, is the correspondence between form and purpose; the fundamental criterion for naive materialism is profit. Neither functionalism nor naive materialism employs the sensibilities as a guide to design. This Mr. Mather himself says when he ascribes to functionalism the limitations of scientific method. But he implies that the aesthetic merit of functional architecture is that it lends itself to the addition of "effects of texture, color, mass, and line" with satisfying results, while the architecture of naive materialism does not. And in neglecting to explain why this should be so, Mr. Mather is begging the question. Our point is that an aesthetically satisfying result is inherent in functional design.

We must add that there is no analogy between functionalism and Darwinism. Functionalism involves the purposeful creation of a new form to correspond to a new need. Darwin's own theory was that new forms arise mainly by random variation and that for these fitness is a matter of chance, occurring occasionally; and according to more modern evolutionary theory, new forms arise solely in this way. The analogy with scientific method is better. But the implication that the content of Darwinism shows scientific method at work is misleading. The achievement of the theory, but not the theory itself, is an example of the working of scientific method.

MARY GOLDWATER
New York City. JANET DANIEL

A few weeks ago I read something by a man who would surely agree with Mary Goldwater and Janet Daniel. He says: "That utility is one of the principal sources of beauty has been observed by everybody, who has considered with any attention what constitutes the nature of beauty. The convenience of a house gives pleasure to the spectator as well as its regularity, and he is as much hurt when he observes the contrary defect, as when he sees the correspondent windows of different forms, or the door not placed exactly in the middle of the building. That the fitness of any system or machine to produce the end for which it was intended, bestows a certain propriety and beauty upon the whole, and renders the thought and contemplation of it agreeable, is so very obvious that nobody has overlooked it." That was written in 1759 by Adam Smith in The Theory of Moral Sentiments. *And it was not a random idea—it was consistent with the psychology underlying his economic theory.*

Now my objection to this psychology is not just that it is old-fashioned—it simply doesn't work any more. What does the Goldwater-Daniel-Smith theory say when it is confronted with a Thirteenth Century French cathedral? Does it say that the complex of vaulting, buttresses, clustered columns, crockets, pinnacles, gargoyles, porches and towers pleases us because of the correspondence between form and purpose? Sure now, and each part can be analyzed into a nice moral argument to show that the whole form is economical and suited to some ritual. But it can be argued with equal force that the building seems to have gone out of its way to defy gravity, customs, purposes and moral sentiments. It is as near to the stuff of dreams as the stubborn material permits it to go. And when you talk of dreams it is necessary to call in Mr. Freud the specialist and old Doc Schopenhauer, the general practitioner.

I have found it useless to try to understand modern architecture by the social-technical theories common among architects today. Some allowance has to be made for the subconscious. There is a rough correspondence between functionalism and the workings of the super-ego. Naive materialism is the super-ego tyrannizing to the edge of insanity. Form may follow function, or that form please best which functions best—Adam Smith and his teacher, Adam Ferguson thought that. But today, function represses form; the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

infant bourgeoisie which built the Chicago World's Fair buildings of 1893, looking for an architectural prototype, found it in the work of the adult bourgeoisie of France; the article which Sullivan wrote about the design of the skyscraper isn't a statement, it's an extraordinary example of repression — these were the assumptions I made in my article. ALAN MATHER

ANOTHER COUNTY HEARD FROM

Sirs:

When I first heard of the PARTISAN REVIEW it was a left publication to which I sent a short story which they liked, though not well enough to print it. Later, when you asked me to subscribe to it, I was under the impression that it was the same publication as before.

I was sadly disillusioned when I read your articles in the magazine after I subscribed to it.

I am one of those who feel that there is no hope left in the world if the Soviet Union should fail. And while I do not agree with every move that the leaders in the Union make, still, I am not such an ass that I feel that just because they don't do it my way, that therefor I will not play. Those who adopt that attitude are, in my opinion, the greatest enemies of the working class, and they will be outcasts whether Fascism or Socialism wins; and I know it will be the latter.

So you can readily understand that feeling as I do, I will not renew my subscription to the PARTISAN REVIEW, nor will I in any way aid or abet your viewpoint.

Sincerely yours,

Brookline, Mass. WILLARD H. SHORT

The letters below were written as personal letters. We think they are of enough interest, however, to print just as they stand.—EDITORS

Dear B——:

Camp —— is in pretty-looking country, gently rolling hills, cottonwood trees, cactus; principal industries cattle and oil. The camp is a huge mess of new barracks, halls, etc. My barracks is a two-story affair, comfortable, hot-water showers, beds lined up in two rows, alternating head and foot. There is an absolute lack of privacy in the army: you even defecate in public—there are no stalls.

There is nothing I can do—even write a letter or read a book (there is no library)—without hearing some whoremastering story in the background, or the rattle of dice. There is no one that I have found that I can talk to, although there are a few fellows who are pleasant enough for casual association.

When we got here, after lunch (much better than Upton and eaten off plates, thank God), the capt of our company, a hard looking compact Texan, gave us a talk, part of which listed the places on the camp into which we couldn't go. There is a Negro battalion near us and their area is off limits. "The army makes us call them colored, but down here we call them niggers," said the capt. "Stay away from them." Then he cautioned the men not to use the whores in W——, a small town nearby that is doing a rush business. "The women there are pretty well used up, so I advise you to keep your peters in your pants. But if you don't there is a prophylaxis station on the post where you can get condoms and a treatment." The army's main worry is venereal disease, and they are right because in one week's time most of the fellows have done more whoring than you can imagine—all in between lectures on venereal disease.

First call in the morning is at 6 A.M. At 6:10 we line up on the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

parade ground in front of the barracks and report, then back to the barracks to wash, clean up, inspection, and then eat. Line up again at 7, and off to work.

We have already been issued rifles (the first day) and we have drilled, marched, learned the manual of arms, bayonet drill (are they ugly-looking, the bayonets!), gas mask drill, riflery, hand grenade throwing, elementary skirmishing, scouting, anti-aircraft defense, tent-pitching, etc. We are supposed to be here for 13 weeks of basic training, but they are pushing us through at a terrific clip and we should be through in half the time. The rush is obviously in preparation for war. Later on we will be transferred to regular army regiments, and there is a chance that I might get somewhere nearer home. Just a chance, though.

These two weeks in the army seem like an eternity already. When I think of the future (a year is bad enough, but you hope that it is *only* a year, and no war) I feel an immense despair, a despair without sharpness because there is no chance for an alternative to this.

I read a little of Tolstoy, but I don't get much of a chance except during the weekend, since we work up to 6 P.M. and lights are out at 9 P.M. and there is no place to which to go to read. I'll manage to get through the book soon, though.

Dear B——:

Yes, as you predict I've gotten used to it at last; I've found a couple of guys it is possible to spend time with; I tolerate, even am interested, by my bunk mates. Though it is not the attitude that you advise, the "Enormous Room" point of view. The interest and value of my army experience will make themselves evident only upon recollection. While you are in it, you are just miserable. I intended to keep the kind of journal you suggest in your letter, but have discovered that it is impossible for two reasons:

1) The only free hours we have are from 6 to 9 in the evening (and the weekend) in which time I have to write letters, relax, read, polish shoes, keep clean, etc. It is just impossible to keep a journal at the same time.

2) A journal requires a certain amount of reflection on one's part, a leisurely devotion of one's mind to sentiments and meanings. I have found it possible only to observe and hope, impossible to reflect or think.

Bob sent me some volumes of poetry—I hadn't taken any with me—and for the first time since I've been in the army I read some verse. What an immense effect it had! It destroyed the character of permanency that this life has come to assume. The old life of books and freedom flooded back into my mind, and, strangely enough, without any poignancy. But on the march, slogging along with pack and rifle, when I watched the free people race by in their motor cars, I was attacked by intensely poignant feelings. When they stopped their cars to look at us, I averted my eyes, feeling embarrassed and envious. But reading a poem was actually being free; not merely envying freedom.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As you see, once the rush of the first days ended, after I got used to the spiritual discomfort, the lack of freedom has come to obsess me.

They are teaching us how to soldier at a terrific rate. It seems that we have had everything: bayonet, hand grenades, anti-aircraft, entrenching ("Dig your hole good," said the sergeant, "because you're going to get buried in it."), gas attack, skirmishing, Springfield rifle, Garand rifle, automatic rifle, and machine guns this week. I am a pretty good shot, it seems, and am entitled to wear a marksman's medal on my chest. The rifle range was a lot of fun, although the Springfield rifle gave me a lot of punishment. The gun is big enough to kill an elephant, has a bad kick. It cut my nose, bruised my lip, made my shoulder sore and tore my finger. But I hung on to it, and shot pretty well, among the leaders. There is something geometrical and classical about the rifle range—everything proceeds simply, and by straight lines, and the object is pure death, uncomplicated by passion, motive or purpose. The Browning automatic rifle satisfied a childhood ambition: I pulled the trigger and the gun spat out bullets with unbelievable rapidity.

At every odd moment the lectures on venereal disease continue. Today they showed us a particularly gruesome picture, with close-ups of syphilitic sores, etc. These, plus the stale air of the theater, made me feel sick (I'm a sissy) and I jumped out into the fresh air in order to avoid passing out. About ten fellows did pass out.

The officers are the most fearful people in the world, afraid of doing things in a manner not prescribed by the official manual, afraid of their superiors, indecisive, passing the buck. The colonel of our battalion is an obnoxious military pedant, always running around ahead of himself, and is the terror of the officers. The non-commissioned officers are crackerjacks, the only people who really know anything. (The comm officers are reserves, except the colonel.) The form of the army is feudal: the comm officers are a superior class, protected by unassailable rights and powers, highly restricted. Yet the spirit of the men is pretty independent, particularly the regular army non-coms, who are our instructors. Today our sergeant made fun of the capt of our company because "he shakes like a leaf before the colonel. Stand up to the colonel—you're a man, just the same as he is. He's your boss, but you don't have to take any —— from him." (Really, of course, the sergeant is wrong.)

I went into town a few weeks ago, wandered around the city, talked to loads of people (it's easy when you're in uniform), and got a notion for the first time of what Texas is like. I like it. It's pretty wild, a little frontierish, shootings every day, a lot of money being made quickly out of oil, men in cowboy boots and big hats, everybody very gracious, easy, independent, relaxed. Texas, though, is probably the most war-mongering state in the union. They are vigilantes, jim-crow, vote for Roosevelt with a passion, hate unions, the businessmen run everything.

The prospect of war frightens me. My only comfort is that it is impossible for America to confront Germany on a military basis. There is just nowhere to meet: only the air force and the navy can fight. Which doesn't mean I can't get killed in a troop transport. Also, the Pres is bewildered: he wants to fight but things have moved so fast that even entering the war becomes a difficult problem—even though we are in the war. Every alternative has been eliminated—even the alternative of the American army destroying the German—and only socialism remains.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"We greatly need a literary review of such standards."
—THORNTON WILDER

DECISION

Features in the July number . . . **Thomas Mann will be Chairman of Decision's Editorial Advisory Board and will be a regular contributor.** Irwin Ross, *The Labor Crisis;* Carson McCullers, *The Russian Realists and Southern Literature;* Malcolm Cowley, *The Michael Golden Legend;* short stories and reviews.

Decision, 141 East 29th Street, New York City

Special offer to Partisan Review readers:

Eight months for $2.00 (you save $.80)
Four months for $1.00 (you save $.40)

Name.....

Address.....

V. F. CALVERTON MEMORIAL ISSUE

CONTRIBUTORS

Sherwood Anderson	James Farmer	Richard C. Rothschild
Roger Baldwin	Vera Fulton	Amram Scheinfeld
Harry Elmer Barnes	Charles I. Glicksberg	George S. Schuyler
Alfred M. Bingham	Herbert Gorman	Herman Singer
Michael Blankfort	Henry Hazlitt	S. L. Solon
Anita Block	Peter Monro Jack	Benjamin Stolberg
George Britt	Michael March	Lillian Symes
Huntington Cairns	James Marshall	Norman Thomas
McAlister Coleman	Nina Melville	M. B. Tolson
Lewis Corey	Scott Nearing	Freda Utley
Thomas Craven	Allen W. Porterfield	Fritz Wittels
Robert Delson	Guenter Reimann	Helen Woodward
Max Eastman	James Rorty	W. E. Woodward

Reviews by John Chamberlain, Rubin Gotesky,
Quincy Howe, Liston M. Oak, Parker Tyler

THE MODERN QUARTERLY

16 St. Luke's Place, N. Y. C. **35 cents a copy**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED